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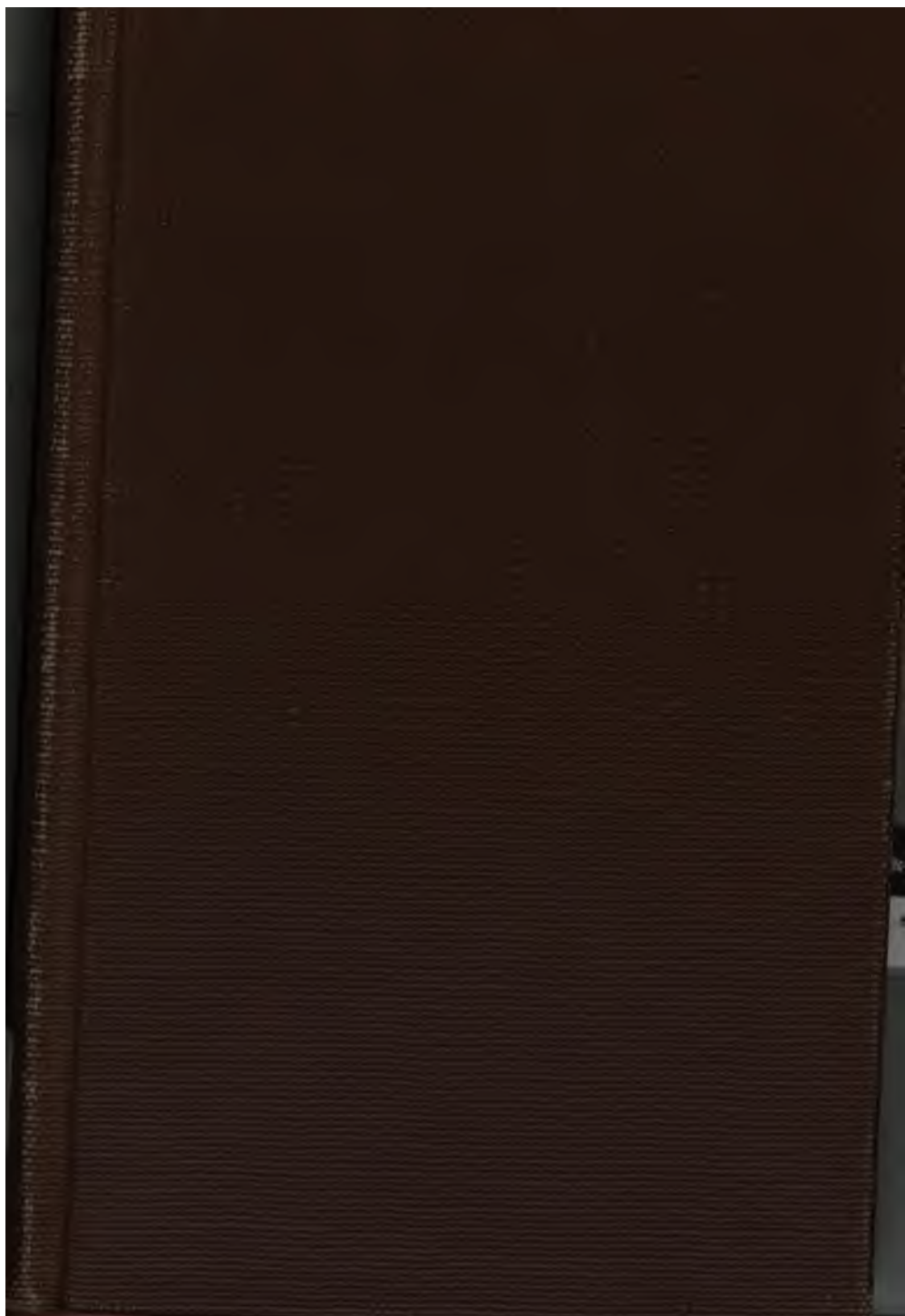
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SELECT METRICAL  
HYMNS AND HOMILIES

OF

EPHRAEM SYRUS.

Translated from the original Syriac,

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL AND PHILOLOGICAL NOTES,

BY

THE REV. HENRY BURGESS, PH.D.,

OF GÖTTINGEN, A PRESBYTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, TRANSLATOR OF THE  
FESTAL LETTERS OF ATHANASIUS FROM AN ANCIENT SYRIAC VERSION.

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"The Church listens to all words: But is not drawn away after them."

*Isaac Magnus.*

London:

ROBERT B. BLACKADER, 13 PATERNOSTER ROW

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT;—  
TO THE DIGNITARIES,  
THE CLERGY IN GENERAL,  
AND THE LAY MEMBERS  
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND;—  
AND TO THE MEMBERS  
OF OTHER RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES;—  
THE PATRONS OF THIS ATTEMPT  
TO ILLUSTRATE SYRIAN METRICAL LITERATURE,  
*This Volume*  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

" IN THE ADMONITORY WRITINGS OF EPHRAEM, EVERY ONE MAY JUSTLY ADMIRE HOW DEEPLY HIS POWER OF INFLUENCING OTHERS PENETRATES ; HOW MUCH OF SWEETNESS PROCEEDS FROM THEM ; AND HOW GENIUS EVERYWHERE BUDS FORTH. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT IN HIS CHOICE OF LANGUAGE AND OF ILLUSTRATIONS, HIS DISCOURSES INCLINE TO THE CUSTOMARY STYLE OF HOMILIES, AND THAT HE SHOULD EMPLOY A SIMPLICITY OF UTTERANCE."

PHOTIUS.

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"THE SYRIANS ATTRIBUTE TO EPHRAEM TWELVE THOUSAND SONGS; THE COPTS, FOURTEEN THOUSAND."—*Asserman*.

## A Prayer of Ephraem.

" O LORD, UNITE IN PEACE  
BOTH PRIESTS AND KINGS;  
AND IN ONE CHURCH  
LET THE PRIESTS OFFER PRAYERS  
ON BEHALF OF KINGS,  
AND LET PRINCES BE MERCIFUL  
TO THOSE ABOUT THEM.  
AND LET THE PEACE WHICH IS IN THYSELF  
BE POSSESSED ALSO BY US,  
O THOU LORD OF ALL THINGS  
BOTH WITHOUT AND WITHIN !"

## PREFACE.

---

HAVING in early life acquired the habit of reading the Hebrew Scriptures, when professional duty required me to attend to the criticism of the *New Testament*, the transition was easy to the Syriac versions of it, which yield so abundant a harvest of good things to those who cultivate them. In this, as in all intellectual pursuits, the desire grew by what it fed upon, and incursions were made, as opportunities offered, into other departments of the field of Syriac literature.

In the year 1845 the Epistles of Ignatius, found in a Syriac version in Egypt, in a form so different from the current Greek copies, were published,<sup>a</sup> and I studied them diligently; and, from the Introduction prefixed to them,

<sup>a</sup> *The Ancient Syriac Version of the Epistles of St. Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans.* Edited, with an English Translation and Notes, by William Cureton, M.A. London: 1845. Mr. Cureton has since much enlarged his contributions to this important subject, in a work entitled, *Corpus Ignatianum*.



became acquainted with the existence of immense stores of literary remains, yet shut up in libraries, and ready to unfold their valuable contents to the student. I became especially interested in the expeditions to the East, undertaken by the Rev. Henry Tattam (now Dr. Tattam), and their important results; and beg in this place to acknowledge my obligations to that gentleman, partly for the stimulating influence of his example, and partly for more direct assistance in my oriental pursuits.

During a temporary residence in London a few years back, I was able to gratify a desire to inspect for myself the Syriac treasures of the British Museum, and I did so with an ardent wish to acquire all the knowledge on the subject which was practicable; as I entertained a hope, at that time, of gaining an official connexion with the Manuscript department on the retirement of the Rev. William Cureton. That hope was not realized, but the occasion was highly valuable to me, as it gave me some insight into the external aspects of Syriac literature; and, what is of greater importance, inspired me with a determination to do all that might lie in my power to promote the study of a language in which are locked up such inestimable treasures. I especially consulted and examined the venerable MS. of the Syriac version of the *Festal Letters of St. Athanasius*, the printed text<sup>b</sup> of which

<sup>b</sup> *The Festal Letters of Athanasius*, discovered in an ancient Syriac version and edited by William Cureton, M.A., F.R.S. Printed for the Society for the publication of Oriental Texts. 1848.

I had received before I came to London, and had commenced translating.

At the commencement of the year 1850 I entered into an engagement with the editors of the *Library of the Fathers*, printed at Oxford, to translate into English the *Festal Letters* for that series of works, and this task was accomplished, and the manuscript delivered to the Rev. H. G. Williams, the editor, in May, 1851. I had hoped that long since that valuable relic of ecclesiastical literature would have been in the hands of the public, but the unavoidable delay will be productive of this advantage, that I shall be able to revise and correct my translation with all the light which the after study of the language may throw upon it. I may mention that about this time I became acquainted with another valuable acquisition, secured from threatened ruin in the East by the aid of our Government: I mean the Syriac text of a version of the *Theophania* of Eusebius,<sup>c</sup> which, like the Letters of Athanasius, had long been lost in the original Greek. This was presented to me by the editor, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Lee (ὁ μακαρίτης!) and formed a valuable addition to my small store of Syriac books.

But the work which first introduced me to the metrical compositions of the Syrians was a Grammar of the lan-

<sup>c</sup> Eusebius, bishop of Casarea, on the *Theophania*, or Divine Manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A Syriac version, edited from an ancient MS. recently discovered, by Samuel Lee, D.D. London. Printed for the Society for the publication of Oriental Texts. 1842.

guage, in metre, by the celebrated Abulpharag;<sup>d</sup> and, although the subject is not inviting, nor the taste very good, displayed in cooping up a scientific treatise in heptasyllabic verses, it yet gave me a high opinion of the flexibility of the language and its capacity for expressing the more recondite and abstract objects of thought. This curious production is said by the writer himself to have been composed in the short space of fourteen days, at a season of his life fully occupied by ecclesiastical affairs; yet it is described by Dr. Bertheau as plainly indicating that its author was well conversant with such studies, and exhibiting an accurate knowledge of the art of grammar as it was then cultivated by learned men. The Proœmium exhibits a poetical and pious spirit :—

“The glory of Thy Name, O glorious One !  
 My soul, Thine image, would celebrate,  
 And, cast into the sea of material things,  
 And agitated in the midst of its waves,  
 To Thee with loud voice,  
 O Thou that dwellest in the highest !  
 With the eyes of its understanding lifted up,  
 It cries and says, O Thou Most High !” &c., &c.

By mere accident, apparently, I ordered from a bookseller's catalogue what was there designated as *Hahn's Syriac Chrestomathy*; but which I found to be a selection of Hymns from Ephraem Syrus, arranged in metrical form,

<sup>d</sup> *Gregorii Bar Hebræi, qui et Abulpharag, Grammatica Linguae Syriacæ, in Metro Ephraemæo. Textum edidit, vertit, annotatione instruxit, Ernestus Bertheau, Dr., Professor Gottingensis. Gottingæ, 1843.*

and accompanied with notes.<sup>e</sup> And, by a remarkable coincidence, I obtained from the same source, without knowing at the time its relation to the work just mentioned, the BARDESANES<sup>f</sup> of Hahn, which contains perhaps the fullest account which had been published of the metres of these Syrian compositions before the present undertaking. The way was thus prepared for a further and fuller examination of the whole subject; the specimens furnished by Hahn, although certainly not the best, excited an eager desire to become acquainted with the Syrian metrical church literature in all its parts, and I procured the works of Ephraem, as far as published, and the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* of Asseman. With these aids the following translations have been executed.

When I first contemplated the task which is now completed, I intended it to be more extended in its range than I have been able to make it. I hoped to give specimens of the principal hymn-writers of the Syrian Church, allotting the largest space to Ephraem, as the

<sup>e</sup> The title of this work, to which I and others are under such obligations, is, *Ohrestomathia Syriaca, sive S. Ephraemi Carmina Selecta. Ediderunt notis criticis philologicis historicis, et Glossario locupletissimo illustraverunt, Augustus Hahn et Friedrichus Ludovicus Sieffert.* Lipsiæ: 1825. This work refers constantly to the "BARDESANES." I may mention here that this selection of hymns by Hahn seems to have introduced the subject of Syriac metrical compositions to others in England besides myself, and excited the same sentiments of their value. I have met with two distinguished instances of this in the correspondence which has been called forth by the preparation of this work.

<sup>f</sup> *Bardeanes Gnosticus Syrorum primus Hymnologus. Commentatio Historico-Theologica, quam scripsit Augustus Hahn.* Lipsiæ: 1819.

most celebrated and most highly endowed of the venerable band. I knew that our National Library is rich in materials for the accomplishment of such a design, and hoped to be able to make my volume more valuable by the introduction of some pieces which have never yet appeared in any printed form. But I found that my wishes had far outrun my capacity for realizing them. The great distance of my residence from London, my pressing and unintermitting duties at home, both parochial and private, and other considerations, together constituted a barrier which I could not pass, and I was compelled to confine myself to Ephraem, and such critical and exegetical aids as my own small library afforded. I certainly have much regretted this on several grounds, although as my task proceeded I found less cause for lamenting my disappointment and feeling impatient under the restrictions which imperative necessity imposed upon me. The metrical productions of the renowned Deacon of Edessa are so numerous and varied, that the difficulty has consisted rather in knowing what to select, and how to do justice to him within such narrow limits, than in any want of materials. I have therefore ceased to regret being confined to one author, feeling sure that in one small volume it is better to convey a full idea of his mental powers and compositions, than to furnish hasty and incomplete outlines of a greater number.

Great injustice will be done me if this work is considered in any other light than as a specimen of what may be effected in the interesting though neglected field en-

tered upon. Anything like completeness is out of the question within the space which circumstances have assigned to me, and would demand a far higher oriental scholarship than I can pretend to. If I succeed in conveying to English readers some conception of the value of the Syrian hymnology, and thus open the way to future acquisitions from the same source, my highest wish on the subject will be gratified. The execution of this circumscribed design has convinced me of the vast extent of the literary field, a small corner of which I have attempted to till, and of the very varied and practised talents which its cultivator ought to possess. It has certainly taught me the defects of my own husbandry. I am conscious that my first experiments want that finish and *certainly of result* which greater experience may give to them. The implements with which I have laboured are comparatively rude in their structure, and, like a new settler in fertile though wild regions of the earth, I have had, in part, to manipulate my own tools. The defective nature of the critical apparatus at his command, is strongly felt by any one who passes from Hebrew or Greek or Latin literature, to Syriac. There is this satisfaction, however, that every new comer does something to make future progress more easy, and to facilitate the course of after labourers.

I am anxious that it should be distinctly understood that my design is a *literary*, and not a *theological* one. I should have acted uncourteously, at least, to the great body of patrons by whose generous assistance I have been

able to execute and publish the work, had I obtruded upon them any strong or party-coloured sentiments from the text-book of my author, or brought into prominence any subjective doctrinal impressions I may myself have received from him. But, apart from a feeling of what is due to others, I am free to confess, that I have felt no temptation to throw upon the troubled arena of Christian life another subject of contention among good men ; and if my readers only feel in perusing the volume, as I have done in the more arduous task of writing it, they will be *less*, and not *more*, disposed to seize any advantage which Ephraem may seem to give to their own sentiments. There can be no question that a limited range of knowledge and thinking is favourable to bigotry and exclusiveness ; while wider and more frequent incursions into the fair regions of varied intellect around us, have a wonderful tendency to enlarge the heart and lessen the influence of prejudices. The *idola specûs* can neither breathe the atmosphere nor bear the light of calm and free enquiry.

I have found a pleasure in studying these relics of an age fifteen centuries nearer than our own to the times of our Lord and His apostles, unalloyed by any regret at the contrasts presented between the opinions of the Divine of the fourth of these great revolutions, and those maintained in the nineteenth. The mental phenomena exhibited in the works of men who lived so near both the place and the time distinguished by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, are, to me, too deeply interesting to allow anything to alloy the pleasure of possessing them. Such

men had their aberrations from what we may conceive to be a right line, but are the angles of our divergence more acute? We study and admire a classic author, although his theology and ethics may be thoroughly adverse to our own : much more should a literature, every line of which is dedicated to God and our Redeemer, receive our homage, notwithstanding its occasional departures from the views and practices of our own age.

I have discovered, as one result of my labours, that a very strong feeling exists in one department of the Church of England against patristic literature ; so strong indeed, that it has, in some cases, overcome private respect for myself, and prevented its subjects from lending me any assistance in my undertaking. Now, let it be granted that such literature has had its injudicious cultivators, under whose hands it has produced briars and thorns ; yet, I would ask, is that any reason why the land in future should lie idle ? I would further enquire whether such a literature can be neglected with safety ; and whether its rejection by one party will not more fatally lead to its abuse by another. The true problem is this :—*Can the phenomena, presented by the Church in its historical development, be ignored on either Christian or philosophical grounds ?* If certain results have followed the setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth, it is difficult to see what good end can be answered by attempting to throw them into forgetfulness, or by frowning upon those who take upon themselves to record them. Any system which endeavours to prop itself up by a *one-sided and partial*



reference to antiquity, must fail to win the love of the thoughtful, however it may be lauded by the fanatical. This was the old trick of the anti-geologists, practised by some parties to this day. Unable to cope with the lucid reasonings of men who deduced their conclusions from facts, they decried the facts as dangerous to religion and morals, and warned all good men to shut their eyes against them. But revelation has been illustrated and not injured by geology ; and so will Christian truth in its objective reality be advanced, and not retarded, by a full recognition of all the phenomena which from age to age have clustered around it. It is in reference to this view of our duty with regard to conflicting opinions, that the motto of the title-page has been chosen :—“ *The Church listens to all words : but is not drawn away after them.*”

On these principles the selection has been made by me from the works of Ephraem, without any reference to the approval or dislike of a party ; nor have I excluded or introduced a single hymn on theological grounds. I would say that no verse has received a colouring from my own sentiments, did I not know that as the ray passing through a coloured medium, borrows its hue, so the character of our mental impressions imperceptibly fashions the words we utter. My task has been a pleasant one ; so much so as to leave a strong feeling of regret on its completion. May a portion, at least, of my own pleasurable emotions be experienced by my readers.

There are one or two minor features of the work to which this is the proper place to refer. My prospectus

contained a hymn printed side by side with the Syriac original, for the purpose of conveying a more definite idea of the metrical compositions, and I have been requested, in several cases, to pursue this method throughout the whole work. I could not do this for many reasons. The expense of printing so much oriental matter would have been too great, and its introduction would have been useless to the greater part of my readers. As a Chrestomathy, considering the expensiveness of Ephraem's printed works, such a selection of them would be desirable, but my plan did not allow me to make the translations mere aids to the student of the Syriac language. The notes indeed contain much learned matter, but I hope they will be found, in most cases, instructive to the general reader as well as to the scholar. I have desired, in the whole execution of the volume, even in its external and more mechanical features, to attract English readers, and to shew that a Father of the Church may furnish popular as well as more recondite reading.

I have paid particular attention to the Indices, which, I hope, are as full as the most correct scholar could desire. I confess I have gone almost to an extreme in giving a copious guide to the contents of a work of small extent, from the constant annoyance I experience from the want of a full index in works intended to be of practical utility. That this charge lies against English books more than against those which are printed on the Continent, is not creditable to us as a nation, and it is time the reproach were removed. The Index of Syriac words will convince

any one what ample materials are at hand for improving the lexicography of the language, since so small a portion of its literature has yielded so many words and meanings as yet unedited.

I beg to return my sincere thanks to all those gentlemen who by their aid and advice have promoted my undertaking. Nor can I allow myself to forget how much of my own comfort, and the beauty and utility of the volume, are due to the printers. At so great a distance from the press, it would have been very troublesome to have ensured correctness in the Oriental types, had they not shared with me an ambition to make the work, in this respect, *faultless*. The reception of the present volume will decide whether I shall present to the British public any further stores from this fertile department of the literature of the Church.

HENRY BURGESS.

Blackburn, February 26, 1853.

## INTRODUCTION.

---

FROM the proximity of Syria to the scenes of the labours of our Lord, and from the similarity of its language and customs to those of Palestine, it might have been expected that Christianity would establish itself there at an early period. Such was the fact, as we learn from the New Testament. In its capital city, equally renowned for its political importance and its devotion to sensuality, converts were early made to the new faith, *and the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch*. A name which was destined to make itself known all over the earth, was there given to the followers of the Redeemer, whether as a reproach or an honourable distinction it is difficult to say. The fact itself however is characteristic of the attention which Christianity attracted, and proved to be a fit introduction to that entire influence which it soon exerted over the whole of Syria.

We will concede to antiquity the truth of the tradition, that the Apostle Thaddeus, or Thomas, founded the Christian Church at Edessa, formerly the residence of the Macedonian kings, afterwards celebrated for its schools of

learning, and even now a city of considerable importance. Here the Syriac translation of the New Testament was used towards the close of the second century; this has historical certainty, but it may have been in existence much earlier; and, from the learned tendencies of Edessa, it is not improbable that it deserves the honour of having produced a work which is second in value only to its inspired archetype. However this may be, it is certain that in the northern parts of the Syrian Mesopotamia, a peculiar form of the Aramaic dialect early prevailed, which has been properly called *the ecclesiastical Syriac*, the same in substance with that before existing, yet possessing some distinctive features derived from the introduction of Christian ideas. It is in this dialect that the literature exists which we have now to treat of, the copiousness and variety of which have been always known, but at the same time, from various causes it has been unfortunately neglected.

When the student comes in contact with this Syrian Church literature, either in manuscript or printed books, he is attracted by the singular fact, that much of it is in a metrical form. We lay stress on the word *student*, because a superficial investigation will leave the phenomenon unnoticed, as has indeed happened to men of learning.<sup>a</sup> Both

<sup>a</sup> In the third volume of the Roman edition of the works of Ephraem, two metrical pieces are printed in Syriac in the form of verse. Each is entitled *Precatio Ephraem*. They are printed as if in dodecasyllabic metre, but it is more probably tetrasyllabic. Now learned men have been so far mistaken as to imagine that these are the only printed Syriac remains of the metrical works of this Father. Hahn notices two who fell into this error, the mention of whom will give an opportunity of indicating their learned productions on Christian hymno-

in manuscripts and printed books the metrical verses of this literature are generally written as prose, only a point indicating the close of a rhythm, and that not always; so that such works may be consulted occasionally as books of reference, without their artificial construction being perceived. But apart from all marks of distinction, as soon as these compositions are read and studied in their individual completeness, their rhythmical character becomes evident, sometimes from the poetical style of what is thus circumscribed by these prosodical measures, but always from the moulding and fashioning which the language has to undergo before it will yield up its freedom to the fetters of verse. This then is the sphere of our present undertaking, and it will be our duty to trace up this metrical literature to its origin, as far as historical light will guide us:—to say something on the laws by which its composition appears to be regulated:—to glance at its existing monuments:—and then, more especially, to treat of the works of Ephraem, the great master of this literature, a few of whose compositions are now brought before the English public.

# I. ON THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SYRIAN METRICAL LITERATURE.

It is not unreasonable to suppose, that whatever hymno-

logy: *Fr. Münter* in his dissertation *Ueber die älteste christliche Pöésie*, prefixed to his metrical version of the Apocalypse; *Augusti, de Hymnis Syrorum sacris* (which the writer has in vain endeavoured to procure). Mention may also be made here of *Rambach, Anthologie christlicher Gesänge aus allen Jahrhunderten der*

logy existed in the Jewish ritual at the time of Christ would pass over into the service of the new Church; and such we find to be the fact, as far as history and tradition refer to the subject. Our Saviour sung a hymn before His passion at the paschal feast. The believers at Colossè were exhorted by Paul to teach and admonish one another *in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*; and those at Ephesus received a similar command in reference to their own private edification: *speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*. As, in the time of this Apostle, there could have been no new literary development, these instructions must refer to the lyrical compositions of the old dispensation. From the earliest periods there are references to the use of the Old Testament psalter in Christian worship, and a curious event connected with it in the Church at Antioch is related by Eusebius. It appears that Paul of Samosata, the bishop of that Church, about the middle of the third century, forbade the use of new songs in divine service, and insisted on the *Psalms of David* alone being sung. He was devoted to the heresy which afterwards took the name of Arius, and in his own time gave rise to the sect of the Paulians; and he thus made a pretended love of antiquity an excuse for banishing the more free compositions which had been introduced. But it does not require proof that Christians, in the earliest

*Kirche*.—(See Hahn, *Bardesanes*, p. 51; and *Ueber den Gesang in der Syrischen Kirche*, p. 58.)

times, adopted whatever related to song which had been consecrated to the temple and synagogue service.

As a Jewish element was thus inevitably introduced into the ritual of the Christian Church, so it could not but happen that the culture of the Gentile world should exert an influence; and hence the well-known and popular rhythms of the Greeks and Latins would gradually mingle themselves with the more stately Hebrew hymnology, and thus give variety, freedom, and life to divine service, and diffuse a pious merriment in Christian households. That nothing of this kind took place among the Jews is accounted for by their isolation from the rest of mankind, and the contempt in which they held the manners and customs of the surrounding and distant nations. But the barriers of national exclusiveness were thrown down by Christ, and it thus became accordant with the spirit of His religion, and not contrary to it, to use whatever was in itself innocent and good among the heathen nations. The entire freedom of St. Paul from every mere prejudice is a most remarkable feature of his character, and by it he was fitted for his noble mission. We can easily see from what he says respecting the use of meats sacrificed to idols, how tolerant he must have been to any new practice which involved no sacrifice of conscience and tended to edification.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> This freedom of the new dispensation from the rigid forms which Christ found in existence, is beautifully expressed in the following comment on Matt. xiii. 52: "*Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder,*" &c. As a householder shews his visitors his jewels;



The lyrical poetry of the Greek and Latin literature, must have been familiar even to the Hellenist Jews, while it was vernacular to many of the heathen converts; it was thus natural that when these men were formed into Christian societies, what was known to give life to heathen literature and an idolatrous cultus, should be transferred to the House of the Lord. This is at least our own theory, and we think it has as much probability about it as any conjecture can have, and will well account for the fact, that in the early Church metrical compositions were so soon introduced. Jewish poetry consisted in parallelisms, and a certain measured but irregular verse; while that of the Greeks and Latins was regular in its construction and numbered by feet. The difference between the two was certainly very great, but, in the absence of any command to the contrary, the latter was sure to win its way and become common.

Intimately connected with this subject, is that of antiphonal or responsive singing in religious worship. It is well known that the ecclesiastical historian, Socrates (lib. vi., cap. 8), attributes this custom to the patriarch Igna-

exhibits in pleasing alternation the modern and the antique, and leads them from the common to the rare, so must the teacher of divine truth in the new manifestation of the kingdom of God bring out of his treasures of knowledge truths old and new, and gradually lead his hearers from the old and usual to the new and unaccustomed. Utterly unlike the Rabbins, with their obstinate and slavish adherence to the letter, the teachers of the new epoch were to adapt themselves freely to the circumstances of their hearers, and, in consequence, to present the truth under manifold varieties of form. In a word, Christ himself, as a Teacher, was the model for his disciples."—(Neander, *The Life of Jesus Christ*, book iv., part ii., chap. ii.)

tius, who is said to have learned it from the angels, whom, in a vision, he saw chanting in two companies. But Theodoret, on the other hand (lib. ii., cap. 24), makes two monks, Flavianus and Diodorus, the authors of it, in the time of Constantine. The tradition respecting Ignatius is pretty good evidence that the anthem was in use in the Church at Antioch at a much earlier period than Theodoret mentions, and the monuments of the Syriac Churches confirm it. There can be no doubt that Ambrose conveyed the custom from Syria to the West; nor that Flavianus and Diodorus accomplished for it a similar migration. The uncertainty of the accounts of it proves its high antiquity; nor perhaps is it easy to decide whether responsive singing, to some extent, did not exist in the Jewish service. It is clear that a similar practice is alluded to in 1 Sam. xviii., 7, where it is said, "*the women answered one another as they played, and said,*" &c. The Hebrew and Syriac texts both favour this idea, nor is the version of the LXX., καὶ ἐξῆρχον αἱ γυναῖκες, *the women took the lead*, at all opposed to it. The structure also of the 136th Psalm, compared with 2 Chron. v. 13, may lead to the same conclusion.

Hahn, on the presumption that responsive chanting was an invention of the early Church, thus accounts for its origin. He says that a translation of the Hebrew Psalter was first used, and that, in Syria, "the want of rhythm and metre produced a monotony, and an absence of grace and sweetness, by which the attention, vivacity, and joy of the mind were dissipated; and that, in consequence of

this, the method of reponsive chanting (*Antiphonie*) was contrived to throw life into the song."<sup>o</sup> This is an account sufficiently probable, of the preference generally given to variety and life, over monotony and dullness ; and may be the process which led the Syrian Christians to leave the plain Psalms, for compositions more congenial with their tastes and habits. But we are inclined to think, that on the whole subject more light may yet be thrown by future researches, and that it will probably be found, that in Syria, as elsewhere, Christians introduced into their practice whatever of national customs, in relation to music, they found ready to their hands.

But, in whatever obscurity the origin of Syrian hymnology may be involved, we come very early to historical data, and find that harmonious composition, of whose birth we are doubtful, an actual living instrument of thought, powerful both for good and for evil. The name of BARDESANES, a Gnostic Christian, stands first in relation to this metrical literature. He flourished in the second century, but the chronology of his life is uncertain, and, although he exerted great influence in his day, and is mentioned by the earlier ecclesiastical historians, it is surprising how almost mythic his history is, from the want of definite and fixed starting-points. He was a native of Edessa, from whose river, Daison, he took his name. To this circumstance Ephraem alludes in his second homily against heresies (tom. v., p. 439) :—

"Who first by the name of Daision  
Surnamed Bardesanes?  
He has more affinity with a son of Daision (a man)  
Than with the river Daision;  
For that stream never brought forth  
Thistles and tares!"

Hahn, in his learned monograph, called "BARDESANES Gnosticus," draws an interesting portrait of him from the scattered materials at his command, and makes him less heretical than others, who, like him, were the promulgators of Gnostic sentiments. But Neander attributes the reputation of Bardesanes for a kind of orthodoxy, to the cunning manner in which he concealed and modified his opinions in public. He says,<sup>d</sup> "Bardesanes, like other Gnostics, was in the habit of accommodating himself, when he spoke publicly in the Church, to the *prevailing* opinions; he let himself down in this way to the level of *physical natures*." Yet Neander concedes that he was moderate in his errors, compared with some others. "He did, in many points, really agree, more than other Gnostics, with the orthodox doctrine. He could even write, from honest conviction, against many other Gnostic sects then spreading themselves in Syria."

It is agreed on every hand, that Bardesanes acquired great influence in the second century, in Syria, by the use of metrical compositions, in which he adapted his heresies to the public taste, and gained for them an extensive circulation. This we learn especially from Ephraem, who,

<sup>d</sup> *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, vol. II., p. 145. Ed. Clark.

from living and labouring in the scenes formerly occupied by his deceased opponent, and among his followers, is continually alluding to him in his writings. In his fifty-third Homily against heretics, (tom. v., p. 553,) he gives the following explicit account of his musical genius, written in pentasyllabic metre :—

“ For these things Bardesanes  
Uttered in his writings.—  
He composed odes,  
And mingled them with music ;  
He harmonized Psalms,  
And introduced measures.—  
By measures and balances,  
He divided words.  
He thus concealed for the simple  
The bitter with the sweet.  
For the sickly do not prefer  
Food which is wholesome.  
He sought to imitate David,  
To adorn himself with his beauty  
So that he might be praised by the likeness.  
He therefore set in order,  
Psalms one hundred and fifty.  
But he deserted the truth of David,  
And only imitated his numbers.”

Certainly Ephraem appears, in this passage, to give to Bardesanes the credit of inventing the Syriac hymnology. He expressly says that he introduced (ܐܢܬܐ) measures, although it may admit of a doubt whether this means that he invented them in the first instance, or brought into fashion some novel ones of his own, or even that he used existing machinery for the circulation of his opinions. However this may be, his testimony is clear as to the

popularity which the productions of Bardesanes secured, for in the first homily of the same collection (tom. v., p. 439), he pays a compliment to his skill and influence, while he blames his use of them :—

“In the resorts of Bardesanes  
There are songs and melodies.  
For seeing that young persons  
Loved sweet music,  
By the harmony of his songs  
He corrupted their minds.”

One more passage may be quoted, bearing the same testimony to the captivating power of this modulator of the rugged language of the Syrians. In the fifty-fifth homily against heresies (tom. v., p. 557), Ephraem gives some extracts from a work of Bardesanes in hexasyllabic metre, and, after a quotation of a very objectionable character, says :—

“Thus in his Odes he testifieth—  
(This wizard by his blandishments,  
And this lax one by his melodies),—  
That he dishonours the fair name  
Of the Holy Spirit.”

There can, therefore, be no question that Bardesanes made great use of measured verse to instil his doctrines into the minds of the susceptible people of Edessa.

It is equally clear that he gave his name, in after ages, to a particular metre, the pentasyllabic. This is proved by an incidental note affixed to the sixty-fifth homily of Ephraem against the *Scrutators*, (tom. vi., p. 128.) At the close of that piece, it is said, Here end the seventeen

hymns according to the tunes of the songs of Bardesanes, ܡܬܪܥܢܐ ܕܡܬܪܥܢܐ ܕܡܬܪܥܢܐ. Metres were called after his name, which is perhaps as great a compliment as a musician can have paid him. As Hahn says, "Gnosis itself is poetry, it is not therefore wonderful that among its admirers true poets should have been found. Tertullian mentions the Psalms of Valentinus; and Marcus, his disciple, a contemporary of Bardesanes, inculcated his Gnosticism in a song, in which he introduced the Æons conversing."<sup>e</sup> The undoubted skill of Bardesanes makes it more to be regretted that we have only a few fragments of his works, and those quoted by his opponents, to convey an unfavourable impression. We may perhaps be allowed to make a remark suggested by his history, and that of other distinguished heretics;—how often is it the case that in modes of affecting the public mind and gaining popularity for their opinions, *the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light!* The charms of music have always been recognized in prosperous conditions of the Church, both in the old and new dispensations, and while much has been done in this way in England, both in the sentiments and the execution of psalmody, it must be confessed that more remains to be accomplished.<sup>f</sup>

The name of HARMONIUS, the son of Bardesanes, next

<sup>e</sup> Bardesanes, p. 28.

<sup>f</sup> In harmony, the very image and character even of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances, and brought, by having them often iterated, into a love of the things themselves. For which cause there

occurs, as influencing and improving Syrian metrical compositions. He was educated in the language and wisdom of Greece, and there can be no question that he would make his knowledge of the exquisite metrical compositions of that literature bear on the improvement of his own. This is said on the presumption, that the accounts of the ecclesiastical historians, Sozomen and Theodoret are credible. The former states, in his life of Ephraem (lib. iii., cap. 16), that, "Harmonius, the son of Bardesanes, having been well instructed in Grecian literature, was the first who subjected his native language to metres and musical laws, (πρῶτον μέτροις καὶ νόμοις μουσικοῖς τὴν πατέρα φωνὴν ὑπαγαγεῖν,) and adapted it to choirs of singers, as the Syrians now commonly chant; not indeed using the writings of Harmonius, but his numbers (τοῖς μέλεσι). For not being altogether free from his father's heresy, and the things which the Grecian philosophers boasted of concerning the soul, the body, and regeneration, (παλιγγενεσίας) having set these to music he mixed them with his own writings." The notice of Theodoret is yet more brief. He says, (lib. iv., cap. 29,) "And since Harmonius, the son of Bardesanes, had formerly composed certain songs, and, mingling his impiety with the sweetness of music, enticed his hearers and allured them to destruction, having taken from him metrical harmony, (τὴν ἁρμονίαν τοῦ μέλους) Ephraem mixed godliness with it," &c.

is nothing more contagious and pestilent than some kinds of harmony; than some, nothing more strong and potent unto good."—Hooker, *Eccelesiastical Polity*, book v., chap. 38.



These accounts seem natural and trustworthy until we remember that Ephraem, who could not be mistaken in the matter, attributes to the father, Bardesanes, the inventions or adaptations, which the Greek historians ascribe to the son Harmonius. It is also very remarkable that Harmonius is not mentioned, as far as we can discover, by Ephraem or any other Syriac writer, an anonymous author of a *Compendium of Ecclesiastical History* excepted; who only gives a translation of the passage just quoted from Theodoret, as may be seen in Asseman, (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 48.) Certainly if this man exerted such an influence on Syriac metrical literature as to eclipse the honours of his father, in the sources whence Sozomen and Theodoret drew their information, it is strange that no more should be said about him by his own countrymen. We do not draw any conclusion however from this omission, but merely state it, in the hope it may lead to some fresh discovery.

Hahn admits, without any expressed hesitation, the testimony of the Greek historians, their mistake as to the *invention* of the metres excepted, and ingeniously traces to Harmonius certain features of the Syriac poetry. He says, "It is not improbable that Harmonius enriched the Syrian metrical art and hymnology with some new Grecian measures and melodies, (*Versmaaszen und Weisen*,) and perhaps he first arranged the heptasyllabic metre, so like the anacreontic, and the tetrasyllabic or dodecasyllabic, so closely related to the trochaic Greek verse."<sup>g</sup> An in-

<sup>g</sup> Ueber den Gesang in der Syrischen Kirche, p. 61.

cidental allusion to Harmonius by Asseman, (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 61,) intimates that in the later transcriptions of Syriac literature his name and influence were acknowledged, since both he and his father Bardesanes are mentioned in manuscripts as the inventors of metres. Asseman says that, "long before these authors," that is, Ephraem and other poets, "the Syrians used songs of this kind, as, for instance, Bardesanes and Harmonius. The tunes or rubrical marks affixed to the hymns (in manuscripts) indicate this, to which the compositions of Ephraem and others are referred, as to something prior and well known." It is true this passage leaves it doubtful whether Harmonius is spoken of merely as an illustration of the statement that there were older hymn writers than Ephraem, or whether his name actually occurs in the rubrical notes as we have seen his father's does. It is much to be regretted that these valuable manuscript references are not printed in the Roman edition of the works of Ephraem, with the single exception given in relation to Bardesanes, which is mentioned above.

Only one more name has historical or traditionary importance in Syriac metrical literature, until we come to Ephraem; that is BALAEUS, or more properly BALAI, ܒܠܝ; who appears to have been a disciple of Ephraem. He is spoken of by Abulpharag in the following way: "After the Nicene Council had been held, our holy Ephraem began to write sacred hymns and odes ܥܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ, against the heresies of his day. And

other doctors also, as Isaac, and a certain Balai, composed many songs, after the manner of the writings we have received from David." Asseman, commenting on this (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 167) says, "It hence appears that Balaeus was a contemporary with Isaac, the disciple of Ephraem." He then gives a catalogue of his extant writings, all of them metrical, and, except one, pentasyllabic.

It may well excite surprise, since this is all that is known of Balaeus, that he should, traditionally, have been considered the inventor of the pentasyllabic metre, especially as that was used so extensively by Ephraem, his senior in years and station. Most probably the authors of the various metres were unknown, and then, through the tendency of the human mind to be unsatisfied without giving a local habitation and a name to that which interests it, they were attributed to those who had most used them, or, which is more likely, to those whose productions in them happened to be popular. From the operation of the same principle, the share belonging to Bardesanes and Harmonius in the construction or improvement of the metres, would be overlooked and ignored, in proportion as their opinions became obnoxious to the orthodox. A just dislike of heresy, and still more often, an indefensible *odium theologicum*, have, in all ages, done much to corrupt the truth of history, nor can it be surprising that these causes should have operated in the case now under consideration. This is recognised by Hahn, who says, (BARDESANES, p. 47,) "Balaeus gave his name to the

pentasyllabic metre, because the orthodox Syrians entertained a horror of Bardesanes."

We come now to more certain ground, as laid down for us in the extant works of EPHRAËM; and, whatever mistiness may have enveloped our former researches, here we have the full beams of historical truth. We have no longer to complain of the deficiency of materials, but, on the contrary, their abundance renders it difficult to examine and arrange them, and, by the collation, to deduce whatever may illustrate metrical literature. Ephraem flourished between the times of Constantine and Valens inclusive, and consequently was exerting his influence in the middle of the fourth century. In the life of this celebrated man, by an anonymous Syrian author, a natural and graphic description is given, of the way in which he was first led to cultivate metrical composition, (*Opera Ephraemi*, tom. vi., p. 1.) He is first introduced, saying, in a heptasyllabic piece of autobiography :—

" I found the book of Bardesanes,  
And was distressed by it continually;  
For it defiled my ears and my whole nature,  
With its offensive blasphemies.  
For I heard in his homilies profane things,  
And things execrable in his songs.  
For if the body rises not  
It will be equal with things accursed !  
If He created the body for corruption,  
And it shall not rise for ever,  
Behold he blasphemes the just One,  
And condemns Divine Providence;  
Ascribing hatred to the Loving One,  
And repressing the hope of immortality.

I have therefore read again, my brethren,  
The writings of the Holy Ghost;  
And my ears were quickly closed  
Against the impurity of that sinner!"

The biographer goes on to say, "This champion of Christ put on his arms, and proclaimed war against the forces of the enemies, especially against the wickedness of Bardesanes and his followers. And the blessed Ephraem seeing that all men were led by music, rose up and opposed the profane games and noisy dances, (قبا موقدا) *profanis et inhonestis lusibus choreisque*, Benedict,) of the young people, and established *the daughters of the convent*, (قبا صفا, see Hymn XXIV., note m,) and taught them odes and scales (مقلا) and responses (حقتبا);<sup>i</sup> and conveyed in the odes intelligent sentiments in a sententious form, and things of spiritual wisdom concerning the nativity, and baptism, and fasting, and concerning the whole Christian dispensation, and the sufferings, and resurrection, and ascension of Christ; he wrote also concerning the martyrs, and penitence, and departed saints. And every day these *daughters of the convent*<sup>k</sup> were assembled in the Churches; on the solemn days of our Lord, and on Sundays, and on the commemorations of the

<sup>h</sup> "Carminis genus. Nempe a scald et scansione prosodica, carmina Syris dicuntur, ut Hæbreis מִשְׁכָּל הַמִּשְׁכָּל canticum graduum. Nos pedes in carmine dicimus, quos Oriens gradus."—Michaelis in Castell, s. v.

<sup>i</sup> As the root of this word contains the idea of *conversing, answering, &c.*, and as חבב is *responsus*, the above translation may be defended.

<sup>k</sup> Benedict adds here, as though the explanation were part of the text, "*Quæ nimirum virginitatem firmo fœdere Deo obstrinzerant.*"

martyrs. And he, like a father stood in the midst of them, a spiritual harper, and arranged for them different kinds of songs, and taught them the variation<sup>l</sup> of chants (ܡܨܠܗ); until the whole city was gathered to him, and the party of the adversary<sup>m</sup> was put to shame and defeated.”

Sozomen gives a somewhat similar account, excepting that instead of the heresy of Bardesanes, he lays more stress on the influence of Harmonius, as stimulating Ephraem in his public labours. He says, “Now Ephraem, when he saw that the Syrians were charmed with the fine words and the rhythmical melody of Harmonius, and that by means of these they were induced to entertain his opinions, although he was destitute of Græcian culture, he applied himself to master the metres of Harmonius; and to the tunes used by him in his writings, he adapted other words, consonant with the doctrines of the Church; such are his compositions in divine hymns, and in praise of holy men. From that time the Syrians sung the words of Ephraem according to the metrical rules of Harmonius.”<sup>n</sup>

These historical accounts harmonize with the facts of the case, as exhibited in Ephraem’s own statements, and

<sup>l</sup> This probably alludes to the antiphony or anthem. Hahn renders, “und lehrte ihnen den Wechsel der Gesänge.”

<sup>m</sup> The Syriac is ܡܨܠܗ ܝܡܝܢ the left side or part. Michaelis quotes this passage, but says he forgot where it was to be found. He presumes it refers to flight, “*de fuga; illane a lævo latere dicitur, quod fugientes obvertunt.*”—V. Castelli, s. v.

<sup>n</sup> *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. iii., cap. 16.

in his extant writings. In whatever state he found metrical hymnology, and whoever preceded him in the formation of its rules, his genius seized it and applied it for the purpose of influencing the minds of his countrymen, and rescuing holy truth from error and corruption. His predecessors might have been popular, and they might have originated what he only adapted to his purposes; but their productions have long since ceased to exist, except in traditional fragments, while his survive, an everlasting monument of fine abilities consecrated to God's service. After all, therefore, it is to Ephraem we must look for what is certain in the history and development of the Syrian religious poetry. We have studied with some diligence all that can be produced as evidence on this obscure subject, and it amounts to no more than this: metrical compositions were used by Bardesanes, but the evidence that he was the inventor of that kind of writing is wanting in clearness. Of Harmonius we know nothing but what is mythical; but in Ephraem we obtain a historical stand-point, from which alone a satisfactory survey can be taken of the Syrian hymnology.

As tradition assigned the pentasyllabic metre to Balaeus, so it attributed the heptasyllabic to Ephraem, in both cases with an equal want of evidence. All that can be said on the subject is well summed up by Asseman in his account of the life and writings of Ephraem, (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 60.) "Those are misguided who attribute to Ephraem all the hymns which occur in his name in the Syrian divine offices; for these are not always Ephraem's,

but are merely composed according to the model of the Ephraemitic rhythm, which consists of seven syllables. Those also err who ascribe to Ephraem only one kind of verse, namely, the heptasyllabic; for that his hymns consist sometimes of four, sometimes of five, six, and seven syllables, and even of twelve, is plain from the Nitrian MSS. From the same documents it appears that the verses of Ephraem sometimes have similar endings (or rhymes), but more often the number of syllables in them is alone attended to. At one time the syllables are equal in number in all the verses, at others they are unequal; (that is, in the same strophe;) some verses are tetrasyllabic, others pentasyllabic, &c., as the laws of the metre require; since Ephraem neglected to use no kind of rhythm, having borrowed the form of his numbers from Bardesanes and Harmonius. Those also are but dreamers who assert that Ephraem discovered heptasyllabics, Narses<sup>o</sup> hexasyllabics, Balaeus pentasyllabics, and Jacob of Sarug tetrasyllabics three times repeated, or dodecasyllabics; for long before these authors, the Syrians used songs of these kinds. Heptasyllabic verse is referred to Ephraem because he more frequently used that metre."

## II. ON THE LAWS OF SYRIAN METRICAL LITERATURE.

It would be highly gratifying to the writer, could he hope to furnish anything like a correct account of the

<sup>o</sup> Of Narses little is known, except that he was a leper, and founded a school at Nisibis.



Syriac hymnology, to point out its laws, and illustrate them by existing monuments. But he cannot deceive his readers by holding out such an expectation, because he is conscious that this peculiar literature must be studied more closely and comprehensively than it has yet been, before a desirable precision and fulness is gained in its exhibition. Those learned men, who, being Syrians themselves, might be expected to know all the mysteries of their own language, we mean the Assemani and Benedict, speak doubtfully on this subject, and give no indication that they knew more about it than that the metres were regulated by syllables, and sung to various tunes. It may be that this is really the whole of the matter, but we cannot think it is, from the limited attention we have been able to give the subject. We believe that much more is to be known than has yet been discovered, and cannot but hope that the rules of such compositions may be yet further elucidated. In the meantime we shall only describe the results of our own experience, without going into the attractive paths of conjecture.

There are two works, both of which probably exist in manuscript, which must be studied before anything can be dogmatically settled on the Syriac metres. One is mentioned in the catalogue of Syrian writers compiled by Ebed-Jesu, which is printed by Asseman in the third volume of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*. In this very curious list, written in heptasyllabics in the fourteenth century, in the eighty-ninth chapter, an account is given of the works of Josue Bar Nun, a patriarch; and at the

close it is said that "he wrote concerning the varieties of public ministrations, and on interpretations, and concerning *the value or power of hymns or anthems*, ܡܨܚܐ ܕܡܢܚܐ," which was most likely a treatise on hymnology. As this writer lived in the ninth century, the work, if discovered, would probably throw light on some matters not now very explicable. The other work is spoken of by Benedict in the preface to the fifth volume of the works of Ephraem, as being an accessible authority, which he had himself consulted, and no doubt it exists at Rome.\* Benedict says of the writer and his design:—"Stephen, a patriarch of the Maronite Syrians, in his work on the tunes of the Syrians, endeavours to reduce them to six classes. He afterwards arranges the whole sacred poetry of the Syrians under particular heads, as it were kinds of songs, and then numbers them as they were presented to him in ancient manuscripts."

What we have been able to ascertain on the subject may be conveniently classed in the following manner.

I. ON THE METRES.—These are regulated by the number of syllables, not of feet, as in Greek and Latin verse. Thus while a Latin hexameter may consist of a varying number of syllables, according as dactyls or spondees predominate in its composition, the same metre in Syriac must be rigidly confined to twelve. Although neither accent nor quantity are at present recognized, we feel persuaded this must arise from ignorance of the subject,

\* "Und wie gerne wäre ein Freund der syrischen Literatur und Sprache einmal in Rom!" Hahn.

and not from the neglect of them by the Syrians themselves. It is scarcely conceivable that among any people such important aids to melody should be unknown, or that being known they should not be used. Traces of an arrangement of the syllables on some system are discernable in Ephraem, as in the frequent use of metathesis, by which words are transposed in a manner which in some cases obscures the sense and violates logical order. An instance of this is given in the note *n* to Homily VII., and an attentive reader will have no difficulty in finding others. But this subject can now only be glanced at, as one on which more light is desirable, and we pass on to enumerate the principal metres, which will be noticed according to their relative length.

1. *The Tetrasyllabic Metre* is much used by Ephraem, and from its brevity is adapted for a quick and spirited style of composition. It is employed on all subjects, in funeral dirges and more didactic homilies, as the examples of it in this volume will shew. One long piece by Ephraem, called "The Pearl; or concerning Faith," and containing seven homilies, is written in this metre. We give two verses of the "Hymn for the Evening," the twenty-fifth of this collection, as a specimen of it.

ܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Bkúlhún rámshe

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Lók thésbhúktó.

"In all evenings

Let there be praise to Thee."

We may observe here that the vowels are not generally

fully written in the manuscripts, and therefore the wanting ones were inserted by the editors of the works of Ephraem. In his address to the reader in the fifth volume, Benedict says, that his task was a difficult one because of the defects of the consonants of his copies, and "because no vowels at all were to be seen, which being suppressed, about one half of the text is concealed." As the editors had to supply these signs, by which the verses are measured, it cannot be expected that they should, in every case, be exact, and this must be taken into consideration when anomalies are met with. We have observed that in some places, especially in the *Sermones Exegetici*, in volume the fifth, well-known vowels are omitted, such as always occur for instance in  $\text{↪}^{\circ}$ , and the olaph in emphatic forms as in the termination  $\text{↪}^{\circ}$ . Unless this is remembered, the student of the metres will often be misled.

2. *The Pentasyllabic Metre* is also found in all styles of composition, the grave as well as the lively. The seventeen hymns which begin with the forty-ninth *against the Scrutators*, are all of this metre. It allows of greater freedom than the tetrasyllabic, without being so heavy as the longer verses. Hence, in the translations of this volume, the hymns and homilies of this metre will be found to be more pleasing in their style than those of any other. The tetrasyllabic verses of Hymns XXVIII. and XXIX., for instance, are rendered meagre by their necessary brevity; while those of Homily I., the "Descrip-



will illustrate this remark. If, as conjectured by Hahn, Harmonius borrowed this metre from Anacreon, it is rather remarkable that in Syriac it should be used so much in sombre compositions. We give as an illustration of it two verses of the tenth Hymn :—

ܡܕ ܐܢ ܠܥܡܢܐ ܡܕ ܡܕ	Mór ló'th kfmnáy hám bíshé
ܡܕ ܡܕ ܡܕ ܡܕ ܡܕ ܡܕ	Daúdfth bók Mór ándó bíy.

"O Lord ! appoint me not a place with the wicked ;  
Do Thou, Lord, confess me who have confessed Thee."

As Anacreon has been mentioned, it may be convenient for the scholar to print here two verses from that poet, that an easy mode of comparison may be furnished. It will be at once seen how similar is the rhythm in both cases.

Ἡ γῆ μέλαινα πίνει,  
Πίνει δὲ δένδρε' αὐτήν.

5. *The Octosyllabic Metre.*—Benedict, in the address to the reader, prefixed to the fifth volume of the works of Ephraem, says that "Syriac verse does not exceed seven syllables, nor fall short of four." Hahn makes no mention of this metre. In reference to Benedict, it is very remarkable that he should make so positive an assertion, as the whole printed works of Ephraem must have passed through his hands, and under his eye. But in the case of Hahn there is no cause for wonder, as he merely did as we have done ; he looked over the printed hymns without professing to give each a close scrutiny. We have



long metre, and if our readers will scan it along with some English hymn, they will have a better idea of its effect.

6. *Dodecasyllabics* are spoken of as being a favourite metre of Jacob of Sarug, and very many of his homilies are written in it. We have not been able to examine them, but it is presumed that the metre is the tetrasyllabic, thrice repeated. This is the case with the few verses which are found in the catalogue of his works by Asseman (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 305). One homily is on the chariot seen by Ezekiel, and begins thus :—

“ High One! sitting in an inscrutable chariot,  
Grant me Thy word that I may publish abroad Thy immensity !”

These are all the metres which we have been able to classify, although, in some of the hymns of irregular structure, verses occur which can be ranged under none of them. But enough has been adduced to shew the great variety of which the language is capable, and, we hope, to lead to a more minute examination of the documents, which alone can reveal the mystery of the whole system of Syriac verse.

In connection with the metres, it will be proper to exhibit here what prosodical rules can be ascertained to exist, in relation to the structure of individual verses. A closer study of all cases which seem to be anomalous in the syllabic numeration, will, there can be little doubt, develop something more than we are able at present to bring forward. There are only two figures now to be noticed,



*synæresis* and *diæresis*; these are referred to occasionally in the notes to the hymns and homilies, but deserve a distinct consideration. It may serve to illustrate the very imperfect manner in which Syriac literature has been studied, to point to the fact, that in no Grammars is the metrical portion of it considered as important, and in most it is quite ignored; and, consequently, no rules of prosody are to be found by the enquirer. Mr. Phillips, in his perspicuous and useful Syriac Grammar, in English, just glances at the hymns of Ephraem, and gives one of them in the praxis at the end of the work; but the magnitude and value of this portion of the existing monuments of the language are not recognized. He also alludes to Marhetono and Mehagyono as being useful in syllabic verse, but there the matter drops.

Hahn, in the BARDESANES, and still more fully in a preface to his *Chrestomathy*, enters into this part of Syriac prosody, and we shall give a careful digest of his labours, in preference to advancing any new observations of our own. We here gratefully acknowledge our obligations to him, and although our conclusions have been drawn from independent investigation, it will be more graceful to give him the honour of being the first who arrived at and published them. His work is probably difficult to procure, and service will therefore be done to the student by an abstract of his observations, while the subject will not be without interest to the general reader.

A. SYNÆRESIS is of very frequent occurrence in Ephraem's metrical writings; it is the contracting of two

syllables into one, so that a dissyllable becomes a monosyllable. It occurs in the following cases :—

1. It takes away initial vowels :—*a.* Of the letter *olaph*, whether they are servile, as **לֵן** *thlen enun*, pronounced *thle-nun*; or radical, as in the particle **אֵן**, which in this formula, **אֵן** *hokan oph*, is abbreviated to *hokan 'ph*. *b.* Of other letters, both servile and radical vowels are removed; as **פֹּרֹכָן**, *phorukan*, contracted to *phrukan*; **מַרְחִיּוֹ**, *marhitho*, to *mrhitho*; **רָבֹד דָּדְלוֹ**, *rabod dadlo*, to *rabod dlo*.

2. It takes away vowels in the middle of words :—*a.* In verbs of the Conjugation *Ethpaal*, as **נִשְׁתַּרְרָא**, *neshthrar* is shortened to *neshthrar*; **נִתְפַּלַּג**, *nethphalag*, to *nethphlag*. *b.* In nouns, and especially the vowel *ze-kopho*, as **סַמְמוֹנֶה**, *sammonë* is pronounced *sammnë*; **לַלְהוּתוֹק**, *lalohuthok* abbreviated to *lalhuthok*.

3. It removes final vowels :—*a.* In verbs of the Conjugation *Pael*; as **דַּלֵּף**, *daleph*, becomes *dalph*. This occurs most frequently in the active *Peal* participle, as **סֹבַר אֵת**, *sobar ath*, becomes *sobr'ath*; also in the passive participle in the emphatic form, as for **גִּלְתִּי**, *glitho*, we read *glith*.—*b.* In nouns in the *status emphaticus*, as for **בִּישׁוֹ**, *bisho*, the pronunciation is *bish*.

B. DIÆRESIS occurs less frequently; by it syllables having only one vowel, are furnished with two, so that monosyllables become dissyllables, dissyllables trisyllables, &c. It most frequently happens when there is a sheva or scarcely perceptible vowel, which by the diæresis assumes

a full syllabic character. Thus ܗܠܝܗܘܢ *hlayhun* becomes *halayhun*; ܡܬܚܝܙܐ *methchzë*, *methchezë*, &c.

This summary, though brief, is the result of much investigation, and may at least serve as a guide to the student in his researches. In this department of literature all labourers are explorers, and it may lighten the toil of those who come after us, to be made acquainted with the fruits of our experience. Notice must also be taken of the existence of hypermetric verses; that is, such as are of greater length than the others of the same strophe. These are found generally at the end of the strophe, but not always. For instance, the seventh verse of each strophe of Homily I. in this volume is hypermetric.

Besides the Syriac works relating to prosody already referred to, mention is made of a Monophysite, Thomas the Deacon, who wrote a tract on the Points, and the method of Punctuation. See Asseman's *Bibliotheca*, vol. ii., at the close of the unpaged dissertation concerning the Monophysites. This tract must have been written before the seventh century. Other works more or less related to the subject are occasionally alluded to.

II. ON THE STROPHES.—Some of the metrical writings of Ephraem have no divisions except those of verses, but run on continuously till the close, like the books of Virgil or Homer. But these are less common than those which are arranged in uniform portions, of greater or less length. This might be the result of the musical accompaniments of the compositions, which would demand a regular division; and most probably the first Syrian hymnologist,

whoever he was, availed himself of this natural help to his melodies. Certainly, ancient examples were not wanting, in the Greek choruses, and the Greek and Latin odes; and even the Psalms of the Old Testament, such as the hundred and nineteenth, were suggestive of such an arrangement. In the works of Ephraem these artificial divisions would be detected, although the manuscripts and printed books contained no marks of subdivision. The sense is often as completely circumscribed and hemmed in by the individual strophes, as the verses are by the syllables of which they consist. Take the first homily, for instance, in this collection, the "Description of Paradise," and a slight consideration of its structure must have led to its present translated form, although diacritical marks had been wanting. There is a rise and fall in the style which, although not perceptible on a slight acquaintance, becomes evident to the diligent student of Ephraem, so that the longest pieces soon fall into the parts which art originally gave them. But, independently of this natural division conferred on his poems by the writer, there is another which is still more evident; that adopted for the purpose of choral performances, or antiphonal singing. A doxology seems to have been the more common form of the choral accompaniment, such as that in the thirty-fifth Hymn in this volume; and there can be no doubt that this was the case more often than is expressed in the written or printed text. When the hymns or homilies were in common use, it was so well known where the doxology should come, that it was not thought necessary to

write it, or even to indicate its places. An illustration of this may be seen in the twenty-third Hymn, where the first strophe has the chorus in full, but the others only in an abbreviated form.

The length of the strophes varies exceedingly, from four verses to twelve, sixteen, and even twenty. Many of them are uniform in their structure, every verse containing the same number of syllables; but others are studiously varied, exhibiting great art and labour in their construction. Homily III., beginning, "Speak, O Harp!" is an illustration of this; but some exist which are still more intricate, and have hitherto defied our efforts to arrange them, in the portion of time we have been able to devote to them. Indeed, Ephraem seems to have had a nice ear for variety, and, if what has been said above respecting the dislike of his countrymen to the monotony of the Psalms is correct, he must have gratified the most fastidious seeker of novelties. Even in the more simple strophes there is often a cadence or a variation which gives vivacity and character to the whole production. This may be noticed in the first and second Homilies in this volume; and in the Hymns which contain five verses in a strophe, the fifth being separable from what precedes, and containing a prayer, an invocation, or some lively and unexpected sentiment. These *ἐφύμνια*, or supernumerary verses, have a very pleasing effect when the hymns are read, apart from any musical object contemplated by them.

III. ON THE ANTIPHONY OR RESPONSIVE CHANT.—  
Historical evidence is quite conclusive as to the popularity

of the practice of alternate singing in the early Syrian Church, and as to the important use made of it both by Bardesanes and Ephraem, as an instrument for moulding and fashioning the public mind. And its influence is founded in nature, exciting as it does an interest in a public service, and keeping alive an enthusiasm in more private musical performances. The chanting of the Psalms in the cathedral service would want its great charm if it were not responsive, for although the tune may be the same for both sides of the choir, the very alternation gives freshness and life to the service. This is seen even in parish churches, where there is no musical accompaniment to the Psalms; the responses of the people prevent the perception of any monotony in the reader, and the general effect is pleasing, when the worshippers take their part, and do not allow it to be performed vicariously in the proverbial drawling of the clerk. It is very likely that in the time of Ephraem the art had attained to great perfection, among a people naturally voluptuous and easily led by the senses; and this will account for the great mass of metrical productions even now existing, and for the skill displayed in so constructing them, as to admit of, and give effect to, responsive singing.

There are at least two distinct forms of this practice manifest in the works of Ephraem. The first has the character of the dialogue, or rather of the amœbæic poems of Theocritus or Virgil; when two persons, or more, carry on a conversation on a topic forming the subject of the composition. A perfect specimen of this is found in

Hymn XXI. of this volume, where the subject is introduced by the personation of the deceased, at whose funeral we may presume the recitation took place. In two strophes he asks for the prayers of the survivors, who answer in the third strophe, suggesting a ground for hope and consolation. The dialogue is continued in alternate strophes until the sixth, when the departed one again takes two strophes, and the survivors conclude with one. There are some pieces of this kind in the *Necrosima* much longer than this, one indeed extending to two hundred and fifty verses : others are less perfect in their form, only a part being responsive, as in Hymns VI. and VII. of this collection.

But the second form of the responsive chant is more common ; it consists of a chorus at the end of each strophe, formed either by a repetition of a portion of the poem, by a prayer, or by a doxology. In the translated Hymns everything which appeared to illustrate the practice is commented on in the notes, and nothing need now be added. There can be no doubt that a careful collation of all accessible metrical compositions of the Syrians, with the aid of the rubrical annotations in manuscripts, will clear up what is dark on this whole subject, and put the hymnology, in its literature and practice, on a historical basis. The writer has derived sufficient light from only a partial examination of Ephraem to make him feel hopeful of this result, should he be able to continue his researches.

#### IV. ON THE TUNES TO WHICH THE METRICAL COMPO-

SITIONS WERE SUNG.—Here we know nothing but the general principle, that the effects said to have resulted from the musical adaptations of Bardesanes, Harmonius, and Ephraem, must have had an adequate cause; and that, among a people of some refinement, and at a period of the world's history when the theory and practice of music were understood, some degree of excellence may reasonably be assumed. On the nature of the tunes, the musical instruments employed, and other interesting particulars, we are profoundly ignorant. Even the book of Stephen, the Maronite patriarch, alluded to by Benedict only to tantalize us, is wanting, and we must be satisfied at present with the meagre and somewhat obscure account of the matter given by that learned man, in the preface to the fifth volume of the works of Ephraem. We will quote all he says on the subject of the Syriac hymnology, and then add a few remarks of our own.

“If anything ought to be said concerning Syriac song, Asseman has done this very learnedly in the first volume of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, under the articles Ephraem and Balaeus; yet I will call attention here to the subject in a few words. The Syrian poetry differs from the Hebrew but little in its words (*vocibus*) still less in its metre, both (languages) being most ancient, and always held in honour as the interpreters of sacred things, the safeguards of religion, and the heralds of the Divine Being. But it is probable that the Syriac or Chaldee is older than the Hebrew, since the Hebrews took their origin from the Chaldæans. Neither of these languages defines verse by



the quantity, but by the number of the syllables; and the verse does not exceed seven syllables, nor fall short of four. St. Ephraem frequently uses the heptasyllabic, St. Jacob of Sarug, the tetrasyllabic thrice repeated, to which metres each has given his name, and Balaeus the pentasyllabic."

Before we go further, let us (*pace tanti viri*) dispose of the glaring errors of this paragraph. What is said of Asseman and his learned explication of the Syriac poetry, is a mere compliment, for little is found in the places referred to, or anywhere else, but what is here given by Benedict himself. Then what is meant by the comparison of Hebrew with Syriac poetry? What is there existing of the former except in the Old Testament, (unless indeed various valuable compositions by learned Jews in more modern times are taken into account, which could not be intended by Benedict,) and where can a verse there be found which is measured by the number of its syllables! This is indeed solving at once the *quæstio vexata* of the nature of Hebrew versification, if there ever were such a thing. Further, the reference to Ephraem, and Jacob, and Balaeus, is a sad jumble, containing the veriest traditional tales, as we have already shewn. It is quite evident that the excellent Maronite here wrote on a subject he had not studied, and indeed of which he was profoundly ignorant. The paragraph is even incorrect in minor things, for Hebrew and Syriac *poetry* are said to be most ancient, and the interpreters of holy things, when the *languages* are evidently meant. Then, Balaeus is only

said to have *used* the pentasyllabic metre, while tradition ascribes its authorship to him, as the heptasyllabic to Ephraem, and the tetrasyllabic thrice repeated to Jacob. *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.*

Benedict proceeds: "Further, while the Greeks reduced their sacred hymnology to about eight tunes, and to this day confine themselves to those limits, the Syrians expatiate in two hundred and seventy-five, which their ecclesiastical books exhibit here and there, inscribing the proper tunes at the beginning of individual hymns. And indeed our codices prove that the Syrians were ignorant of no method of singing; for in them we read, at the beginning of each song, what the Greeks call the *Hermi*, (*ἱρμὸς*, *series*, *consequentia*,) from which the order and sequence of the strophes to be sung in that ode are to be deduced.

\* Stephen, a patriarch of the Maronites, in a little work concerning the Tunes of the Syrians, endeavours to reduce them to six classes. *The first*, he says, *consists of verses of two metres*, (*versibus bimetris*;) *the second of verses of three metres*, (and so on till we come to the sixth;) *but the sixth class varies, and is formed of both simple and compound members*. He afterwards reduces the whole Syriac poetry to certain titles, as it were kinds of songs, which Asseman in the above-named place partly touches upon, and then numbers them as they were presented to him in ancient manuscripts. They are thirteen in number, and all are alike in that they follow a certain metrical law, but they differ in modulation, and some also in their subject matter, (*argumento*.)"

If we knew exactly what Stephen meant by *versibus bimetris, trimetris, &c.*, some light might dawn upon us. Literally, it is *two-metred and three-metred verses*, that is, verses having respectively two metres, three metres, &c., which in the usage of the Greeks and Latins would be verses of two, three, four, or five feet. But as the Syrians knew nothing of *feet*, but measured only by syllables, this cannot be the sense of the passage, and we have translated it as conveying the idea, that one kind of tune consisted of verses of two different measures, as pentasyllabic and heptasyllabic alternately; and so of the rest. Now while it is true that in Ephraem there are *some* pieces of this composition, they are too few to establish such rules as are here given. We therefore give up the subject, as one which we cannot explicate by means of the data furnished to us. This short discussion will shew how little real light can be gained from Asseman and Benedict, on the intricacies of the Syrian metrical literature, and how necessary it is for the student to forsake them as guides, and examine for himself. The only *fact* brought before us respecting the tunes is, that they were numerous, and that it was customary for some rubrical mark to refer hymns to a well known type according to which they were to be sung, corresponding to our *one hundred and twelfth metre, long metre, short metre, &c.*

### III. ON THE EXISTING MONUMENTS OF SYRIAN METRICAL LITERATURE.

If only some few remains existed of this ancient Chris-

tian hymnology, even then they would deserve attention and repay the time and labour spent in examining them. How often are antique literary relics subjected to an exhaustive process, learned men contending which shall most explicate their intricacies by the aid of scholarship and acuteness. But the Syriac metrical compositions are very voluminous; they extend over many centuries, and relate to important and interesting departments of the Church. We may therefore justly be surprised that they should have received so little attention, and be anxious that the stores should be made to contribute to the history and archæology of Christendom.

Before Ephraem we have nothing but fragments, such as the extracts from Bardesanes, contained in the works of that Father. The first Syrian author whose works are extant, mentioned in the catalogue of Ebed-Jesu, is Simeon, Bishop of Seleucia, who suffered martyrdom about the year 296. Asseman says, that two hymns by him are found in the sacred offices of the Chaldæans. He is the only writer mentioned by Asseman before Ephraem, who composed in metre. We have therefore little reason to expect, whatever may lie hid in libraries, that anything will be disclosed to serve as a connecting link between Bardesanes and Ephraem. With the latter Father our distinctly defined ground may be said to begin, and we shall now attempt, as briefly as possible, to give an outline of his metrical works, as they are printed in the Roman edition. Many others are in existence, especially in the Church service books, but our means of becoming ac-

quainted with them are not equal to our wishes, and for the present they must be left out of our enumeration. We prefer making the printed works the foundation of our catalogue, to the account given of Ephraem's writings in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*; for as the two sources vary in several particulars, and the first was the latest published, it may be presumed to contain the more certain information.

In the fifth volume of the Roman edition, after the conclusion of Ephraem's *Commentary on the Old Testament*, we meet with eleven SERMONES EXEGETICI, or metrical discourses on separate texts of Scripture. They fill eighty folio columns, and are of various lengths. They are in heptasyllabic and pentasyllabic metre. The longest, and by far the most striking, is on Jonah iii. 2, 3, "*And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.*" This piece is in heptasyllabics, and extends to between five and six hundred strophes, of four verses each. It is a complete epic poem, describing with great power and variety of diction, the repentance of the Ninevites, as exhibited in every imaginable form of misery and sorrow. As far as we are able to form an opinion, this is the best sustained of any of Ephraem's metrical productions, and deserves to be introduced to English readers. We have never seen it noticed: even Asseman merely catalogues it; but we are much mistaken if it has not, as a whole, a claim to be ranked among the productions of genuine poetic inspiration. We

will venture on a translation of a few verses, to give some idea of the style and spirit, only premising that our rendering is not intended to bear a critical scrutiny.—

“ The feast of the king ceased,  
And the banquets of the princes.  
If infants fasted from their milk,  
Who would prepare to sup ?  
The beasts abstained from water,  
Who then would drink wine ?  
If the king put on sackcloth,  
Who would clothe himself in soft raiment ?  
If the lascivious became pure,  
Who would contemplate marriage ?  
If the luxurious were full of terror,  
Who would indulge laughter ?  
If those who were merry wept,  
To whom could folly be pleasing ?  
If robbers became just,  
Who would defraud his fellow ?  
If the city trembled at its dissolution,  
Who would care for his own home ?

Throw away the gold,  
And no one steals it ;  
Lay open the treasure,  
And none will violently enter it.  
The gay ones closed their eyes,  
That they might not gaze on women ;  
Women laid aside their ornaments,  
That those who looked at them might not sin.  
For they were conscious of this,  
That the ruin was a common one.  
For if through them others fell,  
They should not escape.  
The beautiful would not disturb  
The penitence of the men of the city ;  
For they knew that on their account  
The repentant were mourning.”

Some most affecting descriptions are then given of the scenes which took place in families, where mothers clasp their infants to their bosoms in hopeless agony, and the little ones, by some instinctive sympathy, seek shelter in their parents' arms. At length a ray of hope is derived by the king reminding his subjects of some former instances of divine forgiveness of penitent sinners ; and ultimately by an ingenious poetical fiction, the people are said to hear the conversation between Jonah and the Lord, and their doleful fears are turned to rapture.

In the sixth of these discourses, on the third verse of the 140th Psalm (*Opera*, tom. v., p. 332), Ephraem thus alludes to the Apocalypse :—

" John saw in his revelation  
A book great and wonderful,  
Which God himself had written,  
And on it were seven seals.  
No one was able to read it,  
Neither in earth nor heaven,  
But the Son of God alone ;  
For he wrote it and sealed it."

This is interesting, because in the Syriac version of the New Testament, the Revelation is not found. Asseman calls attention to the fact, (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 141,) that the catalogue of the books contained in the canon, by Ebed-Jesu, does not contain the Apocalypse ; but that his authority is thus to some extent counteracted by the clear testimony of Ephraem, some centuries earlier. Some interesting remarks on the references of Ephraem to the Revelation will be found in Davidson's

*Treatise on Biblical Criticism*, vol. ii., p. 153. Still more fully is the subject treated of by Hävernicks, in his *Lucubrations Criticæ in Apocalypsin*. And Hengstenberg, on the Revelation, quotes this very passage from Ephraem, (vol. ii., p. 432, edition Clark.)

Thirteen discourses follow, DE NATIVITATE DOMINI, *On the Birth of Christ*. These are of various lengths, and extend together to forty columns. They are of various metres, and the structure of the strophes of some of them is peculiar, and deserves examination. The last is in tetrasyllabic metre, in strophes often verses, the tenth being a doxology. Christ is said to have lived only thirty years on earth, and to every one of these years is assigned an act of praise from some created beings, beginning with the cherubim in the first year, and ending with "the dead who have lived again, the living who have repented, and the heaven and the earth which by Christ have become reconciled," in the thirtieth. This is a very beautiful production, tastefully conceived, and carried out in a masterly manner.

The remainder of this volume is occupied with fifty-six SERMONES POLEMICI ADVERSUS HÆRESSES, *Discourses against Heresies*. These fill a hundred and twenty columns, and are written in various metres. Asseman says of these :—" He refutes generally, all heresies, but especially those of Bardesanes, Marcion, and Manichæus. Sometimes also he stands up against the heathen, and the Chaldæans or Astrologers." It is impossible to value this series of discourses too highly, for they are replete with



archæological riches, the abundance of which may be imagined from the stores gleaned only on one topic by Hahn, in his *Bardesanes Gnosticus*. Perhaps nowhere can a fuller account be found of the heresies which distracted the eastern Church in the first four centuries ; while the style in which they are written, for popular use, gives occasion for many allusions to life and manners. One instance of this may be quoted. It occurs in the forty-sixth Homily, against the Manichæans, who asserted that the body of man proceeded from the principle of evil. It is tetrasyllabic, and the body is thus addressed :—

“ If thou art too poor  
 To have the medicines  
 Of the physicians ;  
 The visitors of the sick come around thee,  
 And offer up their prayers.  
 One breathes upon thee,  
 Another makes a sign upon thee.  
 If then thou art from the evil one,  
 On the part of the evil one,  
 They pray for and mark thee.

And if thou givest up the ghost,  
 They rise up for the wailing,  
 On account of thy departure ;  
 They wash and anoint thee,  
 They shake out the linen clothes,  
 They adorn and carry thee  
 Upon the shoulders to burial.  
 The wailing women  
 Are confident about thee,  
 That thou wast a good man !”

The sixth volume begins with eighty-seven *SERMONES*  
*POLEMICI ADVERSUS SCRUTATORES*, *Discourses against the*

*Scrutators.* Some of these are translated in this volume, but they can only convey an idea of Ephraem's style generally, not of the variety of erudite argumentation contained in this monument of pious learning. He does not so much attack any sect of heretics specifically, as the false principle of so many of them, that God could be subjected to human reason, as to his nature, and the modes of his operation. This false principle he puts in every imaginable form, and combats with all imaginable weapons. The notes to the Homilies in this volume of translations, will convey some information as to the design and spirit of the whole work. There are many curious and highly artificial arrangements of metres occurring here and there; the second and third Homilies, for instance, composed in strophes of four heptasyllabic verses, are a continuous catalogue of beatitudes, each strophe beginning "*Blessed is he,*" &c.—After these come seven Homilies, forming a separate work; they constitute a perfect Treatise, called MARGARITA, or *the Pearl, concerning Faith*. It is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of ten verses; is highly imaginative, and breathes in every word a devoted love to the Redeemer, his doctrine, and his church. It begins in this manner:—

"Once on a time  
I took up, my brethren,  
A precious pearl;  
I saw in it mysteries  
Relating to the kingdom;  
Images and types  
Of the high Majesty.

It became a fountain  
 And I drank from it,  
 The mysterious things of the Son."


He then takes it in his hand, examines it, and carries out his idea of its being typical, in many fanciful resemblances. At the end of the second Homily he says :—

" In thy beauty is depicted  
 The beauty of the Son,  
 Who put on suffering as a garment  
 When the nails passed through Him.  
 The boring tool passed through thee, *o*  
 For they perforated thee,  
 As they did His hands.  
 And because of His sufferings He reigned,  
 Even as by thy suffering,  
 Thy beauty is increased."

The following, in the fifth Homily, is a pretty idea, and although it may seem far-fetched to us, the principle of allegorizing which it involves was common in the early Church.—

" Men who had put off their clothing,  
 Dived and drew thee forth  
 A precious pearl !  
 It was not kings  
 Who first presented thee  
 To the children of men ;  
 But the mystically naked,  
 Even men who were poor,  
 And fishermen in occupation,  
 And natives of Galilee.

*o* From this and other passages it appears that the pearl was one fashioned by art for the purposes of personal ornament.

There is a paronomasia here incapable of any expression in English.  is both *one naked*, and an *Apostle*. This gives great vivacity to the original.

" For bodies which are clothed,  
 Have not the power  
 To come near to thee;  
 But those which are destitute of raiment  
 Like little children.  
 They buried their bodies in the sea,  
 And descended to thy side,  
 And thou didst receive them kindly,  
 And didst entrust thyself to them,  
 Who so much loved thee.

" Their tongues first published  
 The glad tidings of thee,  
 Before these poor men  
 Opened their bosoms,  
 And drew forth and displayed  
 Their new riches,  
 Among the merchants;  
 They placed thee as bracelets  
 Upon the wrists of men  
 As a life-giving amulet!"

Three Homilies follow on the same subject as the eighty against the Scrutators, but they are much longer, and are found separate in the manuscripts. They occupy above forty columns, and enter at great length into the folly and evil consequences of presumptuous investigation of divine things. For observations illustrative of the *Scrutatores*, see the Notes on Homily III., AD CLERUM.

A heptasyllabic homily, in strophes of four verses, and filling eighteen columns, completes Ephraem's published controversial works: it is entitled, *Sermo adversus Judæos*, and in the Syriac title is said to have been delivered on *the first of the week of the Hosannahs*, that is on Palm Sunday. It is a highly-wrought poetical piece, and would

alone stamp Ephraem as a man of sanctified genius. It commences with an invocation to the Church to praise God for his blessings, and then takes occasion from the day<sup>g</sup> to dwell on the rejection of the Jews by their God, on account of their rejection of Christ. The treatment of the cast-off seed of Jacob is very tender, when compared with the way in which Ephraem makes short work with the heretics; and his heart evidently yearns after the fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers. He makes this pathetic enquiry (p. 215):—

“ Where is the beauty of thy youth,  
 The glory of thine espousals?  
 Where are now thy days,  
 Thy former ones of old time?  
 Where is thy praise and thine honour,  
 And thy adornment and thy splendour?  
 Where is the house which king Solomon  
 Erected for thy glory?  
 Where is the priest and the ephod  
 Who waited in thy ministry?  
 Where the girdle which was bound on him,  
 The chain also and the turban?  
 Where the fine linen and the scarlet,  
 The golden bells and the pomegranates?  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Where are thy solemn assemblies,  
 Thy new moons, and thy stated observances?  
 Joy hath ceased with thee,

<sup>g</sup> Asseman (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 23) asserts that in the East the feast of Palms was not observed till about the year A.D. 500; and if so, the title of this homily is of later date, and Ephraem must have merely preached from the passage of Scripture relating Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But certainly the internal evidence of the piece favours the genuineness of the title.

The voice of the dance and thy singing ;  
Behold ! thy chants are funeral wailings,  
In thy mouth and the mouth of thy children !"

THE NECROSIMA, SEU FUNEBRES CANONES, *pieces relating to Death*, which next claim our attention, will be most interesting to the mass of readers, on account of their hold on human sympathies, and their easy and natural exhibitions of the mode of thinking on practical religious matters in the days of Ephraem. On this account a larger number of them than of other Hymns, has been printed in this volume. They are eighty-five in number, and are contained in about one hundred and thirty columns. They afford every kind of metre, and also a great variety of modes of chanting, of anthems, &c. Some are very long, but there are very many as brief as those we have translated, and quite as interesting. They contain numerous references to the state of the soul after death, and in many ways touch on points disputed between Papists and Protestants. In one respect this is their excellence, since they furnish data for the pursuit of the most interesting study of Christian doctrine, as developed from age to age. We see in these pieces what were the sentiments of Christian men in common life, when controversy was laid aside, and the language of truth and nature proceeded from the bereaved and afflicted, who were contemplating their own mortality, and seriously pondering the coming judgment.

In his introductory observations to these funeral pieces, Asseman says that "the service for the dead among the Syrians consists, besides the Lessons and Psalms selected

from Scripture, of these four things ; of Prayers, **ܡܠܬܝܬܐ** ; of Chants **ܩܠܐ** ; of Odes, or Hymns, **ܡܕܚܡܐ** ; and of Songs, **ܡܠܬܝܬܐ**. Prayers are short petitions to God without metre, like the Latin Collects, not written by Ephraem, but by other and unknown authors. Chants are metrical strophes, adapted to one of the well-known tunes of the Syrians, and to which is prefixed an appropriate verse from the Psalter. Odes or Hymns consist of several strophes, like the Chants ; they are sung near the end of the office for the dead, and nothing is prefixed to them when they are sung. In place of these, heptasyllabic songs sometimes occur. Occasion was given to Ephraem of writing these compositions by the death of his friends ; by the remembrance of death and the last judgment which continually affected his holy mind ; but especially by the rise of the heresy of Aëtius, who taught that the dead were not to be prayed for."

We think that Asseman has here allowed his zeal for the rites of his own Church to blind his judgment, for this whole collection does not contain, as far as we have been able to discover, one allusion to a controverted point like that above indicated. All the pieces seem to refer to doctrines generally believed, respecting which no doubt existed ; and, although the dead are interceded for in a way which must sound strange to the ears of Protestants, the practice has not the prominence, nor the matter-of-fact character, given to it in the Church of Rome. None of Ephraem's productions convey the idea that the state of the dead can be reversed by the prayers of the living ; and

most of the expressions which seem to incline at all to this view, may be explained as passionate and poetical exclamations, or be reduced within the bounds of the beautiful prayer of the whole Church Catholic, *that all those who have departed this life in the true faith, may have their perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul*. But, as we are anxious not to convey any false impression, we must confess that our search has not been so minute as to enable us to make a positive assertion on the subject. On the other hand, let no one think that on these controverted points he has the sense of Ephraem in the Latin translation, for both Asseman and Benedict have a wonderful talent of adorning a few words with their own subjective ideas, and swelling a doubtful hint into a syllogism.

Four short pieces on the Freedom of the Will, remarkable for an artificial arrangement of the strophes of part of them, in alphabetical order, like the Hebrew of the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, bring us to the PARÆNETICA, or, *Exhortations to Penitence*; consisting of seventy-six homilies, in two hundred and eighty-four columns. They are in every description of metre and strophe, and on a much greater variety of subjects than the title would lead us to expect. The Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn for the Lord's Day, for instance, in this volume, are found here. The miscellaneous character of the contents of this series of hymns and homilies renders it highly valuable, and there can be no doubt that labour expended here will be well rewarded. Asseman, in the



*Bibliotheca*, enumerates only fifteen of the Exhortations to Penitence; and, in other respects, his catalogues differ very much from the arrangement of the printed works. The Hymns, DE PARADISO EDEN, follow the Paræneses, respecting which some remarks will be found in the notes to Homilies I. and II. The Syriac printed works conclude with eighteen DE DIVERSIS SERMONES, *Discourses on various Subjects*, in pentasyllabic and hexasyllabic metre, occupying ninety columns. The third has the marginal note by the editor, *De laudibus Dei Genetricis Mariæ, On the praises of Mary the mother of God*; but the homily itself says little of the Virgin, but is rather occupied with the marvellous nature of the events of which she was the subject. Many are on texts of Scripture; and the whole have the appearance of being compositions of different dates brought together from various sources;—the scattered works of the great Syrian father. Our review of his metrical writings now closes from the want of further materials, which doubtless still exist in manuscript.

Syrian writers in metre occur at intervals, from the time of Ephraem almost to our own day, some worthy of attention, but many, it must be confessed, of little worth, partaking of the lifeless character of the Syrian Church and Literature, which early succeeded the glorious state of things under Ephraem. It will not therefore be desirable to enter into any examination of most of these; enough having already been said to prove the extent and fertility of the whole field. Isaac Magnus may be mentioned, a

presbyter of Antioch, who wrote at the close of the fourth century. One hundred and four heptasyllabic homilies by him are described in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*; the first two verses of one of which are printed in the title-page of this volume. He lived in a time of great trouble both from natural and political causes, and one of his homilies (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, p. 230) is called, *A Prayer, or Mournful Song, concerning the Earthquake, and an exhortation to repentance on account of sins*. He complains of the little benefit men derived from such divine chastisements :—

“ The earth has spoken to wake us up,  
That we may meet the last day ;  
The earthquake exhorts us in our dwellings,  
As the thunder in the clouds ;  
The Hun pierceth us with the sword,  
Yet sleep does not flee away ;  
The Arab overtakes us with his lance,  
Yet we are not aroused from slumber.”

Asseman gives an account of two hundred and thirty-one metrical homilies of Jacob of Sarug, in dodecasyllabics, one of which has been already spoken of. From the few verses given of each homily in Asseman, he appears to be a writer of great energy and variety. The hundred and eighty-first homily is on *the Downfall of Idols*, and mentions some of the gods of Syria. Of such historical notices, of an indirect and therefore highly valuable kind, the metrical literature is full. Of the devil he says,—

“ He placed Apollo and other gods in Antioch ;  
In Edessa he set up Nobu, and Bel, with many more ;

He led astray Haran by Besin and Beelshemin and Bar Nemre,  
And by Mari of the dogs, and the goddesses Teratho and Godlath."

All the writers hitherto mentioned belong to the orthodox Syrians, to whom Asseman devotes his first volume. The second records the lives and mental productions of the Monophysites, whose works are rich in learned materials of various kinds. We will pass on to Gregory Bar Hebraeus, or Abulpharag, who was primate of the East in the thirteenth century. In a catalogue of his works by a Syrian, is mentioned his "*book of songs, in which he collected admirable metrical discourses,*" (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. ii., p. 272,) and Asseman says that the collection exists in manuscript. His character for good sense and learning furnish a guarantee that his metrical productions are worthy of being studied. In the Preface to this volume allusion is made to his Syriac Grammar in heptasyllabics. Asseman's third volume contains in full, with valuable notes, the catalogue of Syrian writers by Ebed-Jesu, written in heptasyllabics.

#### IV. ON THE POETRY OF EPHRAEM, AND THE PRESENT TRANSLATIONS.

We have used, generally, the expression *metrical literature*, without referring to it as poetry, from the fact that very much of it cannot lay claim to that character; it is rhythmical and nothing more, borrowing the outward form of the ode or song, as the vehicle for very matter-of-fact, and prosaic compositions. But while this may justly

be said of many writers, it cannot apply to Ephraem, whose whole metrical works breathe that high inspiration to which the term poetry properly belongs. We approach this subject with diffidence, from a consciousness of incapacity to do it justice; but having deeply studied our author, and highly admired his genius, we can at least convey our own impressions to our readers.

As a poet is one who exerts an original creative power, and thus removes his mental productions from the commonplace and prosaic, the enquiry will be, whether this high quality is possessed by Ephraem. Now it must be borne in mind that as to his *materials* this holy man had no choice, being bound by every solemn conviction and duty to discourse of God, and redemption, and mankind, only as the Holy Scriptures speak of them. Homer could imagine anything he pleased respecting the inhabitants of Olympus, and even Bardesanes, though professing Christianity, could wander far in the regions of fancy in relation to sacred subjects; but Ephraem knew no store-house of facts and principles but the Bible, and the very slight addition made to it by ecclesiastical tradition. His God is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, revealed in the person of Christ, in connection with the personal existence of the Holy Ghost; his world of invisible and spiritual beings is peopled with the cherubim and seraphim, the archangels and angels, both bad and good, made known by the inspired writers; his heroes are saints and martyrs, who triumphed over sin and death through the indwelling power of the Redeemer.

And the same restraint which Holy Scripture imposed on Ephraem as to his *characters*, to a very great extent influenced the more *literary* aspects of his mental productions. The reverence for divine truth in its substance, spread itself over the whole sphere of thought in the early fathers of the Church, and made them lay aside, as foreign to their purpose, the heathen literature which in its immense wealth everywhere surrounded them. As they had to defend themselves against heathen misrepresentations, and to prove that Christianity was superior to the mythologies, they were obliged frequently to appeal to the writings of their opponents; but they did this from duty, not from choice. The only intellectual fountain which they voluntarily drank of was

“ ——— Siloa’s brook that flow’d  
Fast by the oracle of God.”

This gives, to modern ears, a sameness and sometimes poverty of expression to writings whose piety cannot be questioned, and the great skill of whose authors was never doubted. This exclusive attention to inspired literature appears conspicuous in the more practical hymns and homilies of Ephraem, as may be seen by consulting the specimens in this volume. But when he becomes polemical, his stores of information are opened, and, to us, his writings acquire a new charm. This then is a *principle* which must be recognized in any just appreciation of the works of this Father;—he was eminently a man of one book, and thought that he could be truly wise by a constant *meditating on the law of God, both day and night.*

But the creative faculty is not dependent on its materials. They may be extensive or very circumscribed, yet the genius is the same, and will shew its originality in the use of a limited field of knowledge, as much as when permitted to rove over all its extensive plains; just as a bee will construct its comb and distil its honey from the flowers of a cottage-garden, as correctly and sweetly as if allowed to rifle the treasures of an earthly Paradise. In the description of a poet by Shakspeare, it is the power possessed of using up "airy nothings," and giving them "a local habitation and a name," which distinguishes him. Indeed, there is more opportunity for the undoubted poetic faculty to develope itself in a restricted sphere of materials, than in one which is more exuberantly furnished. The artist who constructed a pencil from the tail of a domestic animal, and with some humble substitute for colours drew his imaginings on a rough board, never perhaps more indubitably proved his right to be considered an artist when he cultivated his talents surrounded by every advantage. So in the case of Ephraem. We think his genius is shewn more and not less by the fact, that he had a narrow horizon of the materials of knowledge; for he uses what he did possess with consummate art, and developes everywhere the creative energy of a master.

We feel that we are compelled to make the translation of this small volume bear out any praise we may bestow upon our author, and this constitutes our greatest difficulty. We are fully conscious that we have neither selected his most finished pieces, nor been able to do justice to those

we have chosen. In all languages there is a propriety inseparable from the productions of each, which is quite incapable of transference, and this is especially the case with the tongues of the East, so remote in their construction and in their imagery from our own. This occasion of difficulty is much increased by the terseness of Ephraem, produced by the metrical laws to which his thoughts were subjected. This is most frequently a cause of increased expression and vivacity in the original, but becomes a sad obstacle in the way of a satisfactory version. Thus Hahn well says in reference to the task of translating these hymns into German :—"The Doric sonorousness and grace (*Volltönigkeit und Anmuth*) of the Syrian language give a charm to the original which a translation cannot express." How much of the pleasure of a reader arises from the vehicle in which fine thoughts or images are conveyed, is seen in the case of translations of the finest works of the classic writers of Greece. Take, for instance, the *Iliad*, which in its native hexameters is so marvelously captivating, and read a literal translation in Latin or English. While the thoughts are the same, they have lost their true poetic dress, and, in most instances, appear but common prose.

Had we felt warranted in giving a *free* translation of our author, a great portion of the difficulty would have vanished; but we aimed at making our version as literal as anything like moderately pleasant English would admit of. The learned and laborious Benedict, by whom the far greater part of Ephraem's Syriac works were translated

into the Latin language, complains in his preface of the impracticability of transfusing the spirit of his author into his version. But then, he makes up for this by the use of a very lively and florid style on his own part, which, although not the style of Ephraem, conveys to a reader a better idea of *poetry* than a literal rendering could do. An example of this may be here introduced, as illustrating what we are now asserting respecting the execution of our own task. The eleventh hymn in this volume (p. 26) reads thus :—

“Glorious and terrible is the day of Thy appearing  
When Thou fliest through the vault of the firmament,  
And the sublime gates are opened  
Before the splendour of Thy power.  
The gates of high heaven, and of the depth beneath,  
And of the firmament, cover their faces ;  
And the archangel Gabriel  
Expands the banner of Thy cross,” &c., &c.

This we believe is a faithful rendering of the Syriac. Now let us see how it appears in the flowing Latin of Benedict:—“O quali cum gloriâ, quàm horrendo cum apparatu tui, Domine, adventûs dies apparebit, quando æthere in alto te conspiciendum dabis! Tuo fulgore succussæ Cœli pandentur fores, et supremi infimique orbes et astra contenebrabunt. Gabriel archangelus Crucis tropæum magnificè circumquaque ostentans, filiorum sanctæ Ecclesiæ fidem extollet et laudabit,” &c. This put into English, in something like rhythm, would be,—

“O with what glory and what fearful display  
Will the day of Thy advent appear, O Lord!



When in the high æther  
Thou wilt give Thyself to be seen.  
The gates of heaven will be opened,  
Being shaken by Thy splendour ;  
And the highest and lowest orbs  
And the stars will become darkened.  
The archangel Gabriel,  
The trophy of Thy cross  
Magnificently displaying on every side," &c.

The reader will perceive that several poetical ideas are introduced in this version, such as *the orbs and stars of heaven*, to which there is nothing corresponding in the Syriac. Yet the original, as it came from the pen of Ephraem, requires no such additions to make it more striking and impressive. We could not follow the example of the Maronite with anything like respect for our author and ourselves, and therefore have been as literal as the opposed characters of the two languages would admit. Hence arises the difficulty of testing Ephraem's powers by our version, which yet is the only source of information to which the English reader can be directed. We feel a hope, however, that on the whole a favourable opinion will be formed of his genius from these imperfect representations of his muse, and that the careful student of the translations will be able to trace, beneath our super-induced covering, the true style and spirit of a bard.

In the shorter pieces, especially those on the subject of death, there is a tender spirit displayed which makes us feel that the monastic habits of Ephraem had induced no unnatural sternness, nor choked up one fountain of

human feeling and kindness. This is observable in his allusions to children; to the sorrow of parents for their loss; to the great gloom occasioned by the removal of the head of a family; and to the desolation of one left a widow. The absence of any objectionable asceticism is also shewn in his addresses to the body, which is spoken to as a loved companion, which had long participated in all the joys and sorrows of the soul, now about, for a season, to be separated from it. This tenderness no doubt is enhanced by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which has always produced a respect for the mortal habitation of the soul, although poor, diseased, and robbed of its beauty by old age. In his funeral compositions all these ideas are grouped together by Ephraem, put in new forms, and made to produce a singularly deep and tender effect. Who does not feel that a pencil true to nature has drawn the scene displayed in the fifteenth Hymn, as embodied in these words:—

“ O my body, my temporary home,  
 Remain here in peace;  
 And in the day of the resurrection  
 I shall see thee rejoicing !”

or that in the twelfth :—

“ Then the body replies,—  
 ‘ Depart thou in peace,  
 O soul tenderly loved !  
 The Lord who hath fashioned us,  
 He will procure our deliverance  
 From Gehennah ! ’ ”

The fourteenth Hymn, *On the Funeral of a Prince or*

*a Rich Man*, is one which the translator feels has far less of finish, as it appears in a version, than in the Syriac ; yet with all the defects which thus accidentally adhere to it, it is remarkable for an artistic arrangement of the varied illustrations which it furnishes of the levelling power of death, and of the fact that in the grave *the rich and the poor meet together*. A quiet satire appears in such lines as these :—

“ I desired to examine the remains  
Of the wealthy and of the poor,  
To see whether the bones of the rich  
Are more beautiful than those of poor men.”

Yet the fact alluded to is so undeniable and so affecting, that the most supercilious self-admirer can scarcely be offended at it. The commencement is graphic, and the abruptness of the close produces a better effect than any lengthened moral could do. The tale is told and the conclusion is drawn without any effort. The reflections always entertained at the side of the tomb must have been deepened and made more impressive by the recitation of such a piece as this, which after humbling the pride of all classes tells us—

“ There lie those who were enemies,  
And their bones are mingled together !”

As Ephraem was not indifferent to the interest attached to infancy and childhood, so his frequent allusions to old age shew the deep sympathy he felt for its wants and helplessness. This is one element in the bitterness of the death of young persons, that by their removal the staff

of the aged is taken from them, broken, and consigned to the corruption of the tomb. This idea will be found in two or three places in this volume, and it often occurs in other compositions of Ephraem. For instance, in the epic poem on Nineveh, already referred to, he says :—

“ Old men sprinkled themselves with ashes ;  
Aged women tore and threw upon the ground  
Their white locks, once their honour,  
Now turned to their opprobrium.  
The youth gazed on their aged men,  
And groaned with a louder wail ;  
Old men wept for the young,  
The fair props of their old age.”

While therefore the shorter poems do not allow so much scope for invention, they yet everywhere display great skill in their arrangement, in the grouping together of appropriate figures, and in the brief yet expressive touches of pathos they contain. And over the whole there is spread, as it were, an atmosphere of reverential piety, which must be perceived by every one coming within their range, and which would make them highly interesting even if their intrinsic merits were less. The venerable Father always reminds us of the seraphim seen by Isaiah in his vision in the temple, who waited the behests of the Lord with veiled faces, and found happiness in a deep and unmixed humility. In this respect he acted up to the exhortations he so often gave to others, in his discourses against the presumptuous and prying spirit of many around him. The strings of his harp are touched with a reverential hand, and the notes are subdued, though sweet,

giving more pleasure to a pious mind than the bold flights of arrogant and licentious genius. Perhaps many will think some of his hymns tame which we have admired for their simple humility, even as the productions of Wordsworth were once lightly esteemed for their unostentatious treatment of homely topics. Let the reader study the thirty-second Hymn, *for defence against Satan*, and we are much mistaken if he does not acknowledge that its simplicity constitutes its power, and that it derives a grace from the entire absence of rhetorical ornament.


But it is undoubtedly in the Homilies that the strength of Ephraem lies, and we much regret that the fewness of our specimens prevents full justice being done by us to his exuberant yet chastened fancy. We are aware that, looked at as a whole, the immense body of his Discourses will be found to present great inequalities; that some of them, when tried by our own standard, are in bad taste; and that many contain conceits and wild fancies which modern criticism cannot approve of. But these vices belonged to the age of the writer, and were then considered probably not the least efficient passages of his composition. The Homilies on the *Advent of Christ* furnish illustrations of a mode of interpreting Scripture which we consider entirely erroneous; many of the figures are far-fetched, and sound to our ears somewhat irreverent. But, after making every deduction, we feel that we are reading the writings of a fine mind, truly poetic in its tendencies and capacities. We instinctively concede to him qualities of the highest kind, which, had they been allowed a different culture,

would have produced for him a world-wide reputation. What might not Ephraem have become as a poet, if his muse had not so voluntarily and entirely regulated her flights by the subjective perception of the authority of Scripture and of the Church !

We are greatly deceived in our own judgment if the few Homilies now translated, with all the defects we are conscious they labour under from our mode of transferring them, do not prove that Ephraem possessed genius of a very high kind. The first, *on the Paradise of Eden*, is very musical in all its arrangements ; its images are well sustained, and a large amount of correct thinking is conveyed in a form more condensed than will allow of hasty and careless reading. The seventh, *on the Mystery of the Trinity*, contains thoughts and illustrations which would expand into goodly volumes in the hands of the moderns. The last, entitled *Man is ignorant of himself*, is highly philosophical, as that term is used in relation to metaphysics ; it shews that subtil distinctions and acute reasonings were very familiar to the writer, and that he could make his language express abstractions almost as clearly as the more polished and copious Greek. All these are poetic in the mode of treatment as well as in the style ; and are wrought up with an artistic power which is truly wonderful. We admire the man who conceived and executed such gem-like productions ;—our wonder is little less that his audiences should have been able to comprehend and to enjoy them.

But the readers of this volume will form their own

judgment;—we are sorry that they have only translations as their materials for doing so. We must say a few more words respecting the English dress in which we have clothed a Syrian writer of the fourth century, before we bring our introductory remarks to a conclusion. Let it then be remembered that we have written for English readers, and not for Syriac scholars, and that, guided by this principle, we have constantly aimed at making the pieces pleasantly readable. We had no example before us during the greater part of our task, but that of Benedict, whose Latin translation is so often mentioned; and almost the only use we could make of his labours was to avoid the paraphrastic style in which he so often disguises his author. When our prescribed task was nearly complete, we met with the translations of Mr. Morris, whose volume however only contains five of the forty-four pieces now published. If in the case of Benedict we had to avoid Scylla, in that of Mr. Morris it was necessary to steer clear of Charybdis; for his baldness and brevity, while useful to a student of the language, are destructive of the qualities which can alone make a readable book for ordinary minds. There is a German translation of some of the hymns, noticed in the List of Authors, which we endeavoured in vain to procure. We thus were compelled to follow our own judgment, and to combine fidelity to our author with a desire to win the attention of our readers. The learned alone can judge how far we have been faithful in our version; our ordinary readers will decide whether we have succeeded in pleasing them.



It is a mistake to suppose that when a translator has rendered his text word by word into another language, he has necessarily given a faithful representation of the mind of the author. This would be the case if the two languages possessed exact vocal equivalents; each pair of words being precisely similar, and conveying the same idea, neither more nor less. But it is generally impossible to find such faithful representatives, and, therefore, fidelity in a translation may often consist in the use of two or three words for one; or one for two; or, the idiom of one language may be conveyed in a corresponding, though verbally different, idiom of another. It appears to us, that the *principle* on which a translator should proceed is this:—*he should endeavour to convey to the mind of his reader the same impressions as were conveyed by the original to those to whom it was vernacular*; and as poetical and metrical compositions have an artistic form, independent of the mere words themselves, a literal and prosaic translation will fall very short of attaining to this desirable end.

Forms of expression which are common, and even elegant in one language, may, in another, be scarcely intelligible, or convey an offensive idea. Thus, in these pieces of Ephraem, a wife is called a *rib*, which is the case in English, but only in vulgar language; to treat with contempt, is represented by the phrase, *to spit in the face*. These and other similar instances of idioms, which, in our language, would be uncouth or vulgar, have been retained in the notes, but not in the translation. In the case of very




elliptical expressions, words have been supplied, but in *italics*, so that the terseness of the original can be seen by the learned reader. We have done our best to introduce a fine and interesting writer to plain English people, and at the same time to make the volume useful to the scholar. So far from thinking that we have left nothing to an adverse criticism, we are even now sensible, in looking over the printed translations, of many things which might be amended. We beg our readers to apply to us what Ephraem says of man in relation to the gifts of Divine grace :—

“ His work is both little and great;  
It is little in what it accomplishes,  
But great in willingness;  
For he desires without bounds,  
But is able to effect but little.”

*Opera*, tom. v. p. 326.

## V. LIFE OF EPHRAEM.

The great events of Ephraem's life are matters of history; but very many particulars of importance are involved in obscurity, and divide the opinions of learned men. It is not agreed, for instance, whether he ever rose above the order of Deacons; nor is it settled whether he understood any language but his own. There is a long life of Ephraem of great antiquity, in Syriac, prefixed to his works, which seems to be generally trustworthy, except on the subject of supernatural events and miraculous powers. This has been already quoted. There is also



his Will or Testament, which alludes to some remarkable passages of his life. We will merely now give a translation of a short biography of this Father, from a MS. of the fourteenth century, published in Syriac, by Asseman. (*Bib. Or.* tom. i. p. 25.)

“The blessed Mor Ephraem was a Syrian by birth, his father was of Nisibis, his mother of the city Amida. His father was an idolatrous priest, and they lived in the time of Constantine Victor. His father expelled him from him because he was not obedient to his wicked will; he therefore went and lived with the holy Mor Jacob, the Bishop of Nisibis, and led altogether a life of godliness until the time of Jovian. He then left that place, and came to the city Edessa, when he received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and abundantly supplied the Church with the teachings and doctrine of the Spirit. After a time he went to the desert of Egypt, and from thence to Cæsarea of Cappadocia to Basil; and received from him the imposition of hands for the Diaconate. He immediately returned to Edessa, and ended his life there in the year 684 (of the Greeks) on the ninth day of Haziron (June); that is, in the year 372 after the advent of our Lord. It is said of him that before his being taught Christianity, a hermit was living on a hill of Edessa, and that one night he saw an angel descend from heaven, and in his hand was a great roll of a book, written on both sides. And he said to the monk, ‘On whom shall I bestow this book?’ And he

r See note c to Hymn XIX.

said, 'Let it be given to Origen, or to Julian the monk.' And the Angel said to him, 'There is no man who is worthy of it but Ephraem the Syrian.'—Through his prayers may God pardon our offences. Amen."

## VI. LIST OF AUTHORS.

"Sancti Ephraem Syri Opera Omnia quæ extant, Græcè, Syriacè, Latinè, in sex tomos distributa." Folio. Rome, 1732—1743.

"Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana; in qua Manuscriptos Codices Syriacos, recensuit, digessit, etc., Joseph Simonius Assemanus, Syrus Maronita." Four volumes folio. Rome, 1719—1728.

"Edmundi Castelli Lexicon Syriacum, ex ejus Lexico Heptaglotto seorsim typis describi curavit, atque sua adnotata adjecit, Johannes David Michaelis." 4to. Göttingen, 1788. [This is the best Lexicon extant, and is invaluable; but its defects are discovered by every student who uses it, even in his first essays in the language. Its arrangement is very defective, and its *copia verborum*, except for the Scriptures, very slender.]

"Lexicon Pentaglotton, Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriacum, Talmudico-Rabbinicum, et Arabicum: collectum et concinnatum a Valentino Schindlero." Folio. Francfort, 1663. [An admirable work, supplying many explanations not found elsewhere. The Syriac and Arabic are in Hebrew characters.]

"Lexicon Syriacum Concordantiale, omnes Novi Testamenti Syriaci voces, et ad harum illustrationem multas alias Syriacas, et Linguarum affinium dictiones complectens, etc. Indefesso labore elaboratum a Carolo Schaaf." 4to. Leyden, 1709. [A work too well known to need commendation; but it is confined to the New Testament.]

"Lexicon Syriacum Chrestomathiæ Kirschianæ denuo editæ accommodatum, a Georgio Henrico Bernstein." 8vo. Leipzig, 1836. [This is a valuable work in itself, but still more so as indicating what *ought* to be done in Syriac Lexicography. The arrangement of the meanings is admirable, and the particles are philosophically and fully treated. Bernstein has long been engaged in compiling a Lexicon to the whole language, and it is earnestly to be hoped he will be able to publish it.]

"Nomenclator Syriacus, Jo. Baptistæ Ferrarii Senensis, e Societate Jesu." 4to. Rome, 1622. [Not very copious, but clearly and beautifully printed and arranged.]

"Lexidion Syriacum." [Prefixed to Hahn's Chrestomathy; of great use in that interesting little work, and supplying many meanings from Ephraem not found elsewhere.]

"*Lexicon Manuale Hebraicum et Chaldaicum.*" By Gesenius. Edited by Hoffman. 8vo. Leipzig, 1847.

"*Lexicon Arabico-Latinum ex opere suo majore excerptum.* Edidit G. W. Freytag." 4to. Halle, 1837.

"C. B. Michaelis *Grammatica Syriaca.*" 8vo. Rome, 1829.

"*The Elements of Syriac Grammar.* By the Rev. George Phillips, B.D. Second edition." London. Parker, 1845. [A great acquisition from the beauty of the typography, besides its intrinsic merits.]

*The Old Testament in Syriac, with Syriac Title.* London, 1823. [This is the edition edited by Dr. Lee for the Bible Society. We have used it extensively and found it very correctly printed. The absence of the Apocryphal books deducts greatly from its value.]

*The New Testament in Syriac.* Also edited by Dr. Lee for the Bible Society. 1816.

Another edition by the same Society, in smaller type. 1826.

*The Four Gospels in the Estrangelo character, "as read in the churches at Mosul."* Edited by T. Pell Platt, Esq. for the Bible Society. 1829. [A splendid work so far as paper and typography are concerned.]

*The New Testament in Syriac and Carshun.* 4to. Paris, 1824. [This is decidedly the most elegant edition ever printed, and is interesting on many accounts. Yet it is unnoticed in many bibliographical lists. Horne takes no notice of it; neither is it mentioned in Davidson's *Treatise on Biblical Criticism*, just published.]

A reprint of the Syriac New Testament of Widmanstadt. Edited by Mr. Greenfield for the Messrs. Bagster. 1828.

*The Apocrypha in Syriac, as found in Walton's Polyglott.*

*Chrestomathia Syriaca, sive S. Ephraemi Carmina Selecta.* Ediderunt notis criticis philologicis historicis, et glossario locupletissimo illustraverunt Augustus Hahn et Friedrichus Sieffert." 8vo. Leipzig, 1825. [This work is fully noticed in various parts of this volume.]

"G. G. Kirschli *Chrestomathia Syriaca*: denuo edidit G. H. Bernstein." 8vo. Leipzig, 1832. [A companion to the Lexicon noticed above. The selection of subjects is most judicious.]

"Bardesanes Gnosticus Syrorum Primus Hymnologus. *Commentatio Historico-Theologica quam scripsit Augustus Hahn.*" 8vo. Leipzig, 1819. [Noticed in the body of the work.]

"*Ueber den Gesang in der Syrischen Kirche. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des heiligen Gesangs, vom Herrn D. A. Hahn.*" [This valuable monograph is not printed by itself, but is found in a small periodical called *Kirchenhistorisches Archiv*, von R. F. Stüdlin und J. S. Vater für 1823. Halle.]

"*Horne Syriacæ, seu Commentationes et Anecdota res vel litteras Syriacas spectantia Auctore Nicolao Wiseman, S.T.D. Tomus Primus.* Romæ, 1828."

[The second volume has never appeared. This is a most learned and useful work.]

"Gregorii Bar Hebræi, qui et Abulpharag, Grammatica Linguae Syriacæ in metro Ephraemæo. Textum edidit, vertit, annotatione instruxit, Ernestus Bertheau, Dr., Professor Göttingensis." 8vo. Göttingen, 1843. [This has been noticed before.]

"Select Works of St. Ephraem the Syrian, translated out of the original Syriac with Notes and Indices. By the Rev. J. B. Morris, M.A., Oxford." John Henry Parker, 1847. [This has frequently been referred to and quoted. It is highly valuable to a student of Syriac, on account of its strict literality; but this quality prevents its being interesting to ordinary readers.]

We have heard that some of Ephraem's hymns have lately been translated into German by a Romish priest, but have not been able to procure a copy of the work.

"Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ Scriptores, Henrico Valesio Interprete." Folio. 8 vols. Turin, 1746.

The above list is given, both for the purpose of verification of the statements of this volume, and for the guidance of those who may wish to pursue the study of Syriac Metrical Literature or the language generally. References to other works will be found in the places where they are quoted.

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"OUR FAITH IS NOT A NOVELTY;  
LET US NOT MAKE IT NEW BY OUR INSTABILITY."

ISAAC MAGNUS.

# Metrical Hymns

OF

EPHRAEM SYRUS.

“ AND SINCE IT IS NOT PROFITABLE FOR US  
TO BE SILENT AND RESTRAINED,  
LET OUR INFIRMITY RENDER TO THEE  
THE SONG OF OUR THANKSGIVING.  
THOU GOOD ! WHO DOST NOT EXACT  
MORE THAN OUR ABILITY,  
HOW WILL THY SERVANT BE CONDEMNED  
BOTH IN PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST,  
SHOULD HE NOT GIVE WHAT HE IS ABLE,  
BUT HOLD BACK WHAT HE OWES !  
O THOU SEA OF GLORY,  
WHO NEEDEST NOT TO BE GLORIFIED !  
RECEIVE IN THY GOODNESS  
THE DROP OF THANKSGIVING :—  
THOU, WHO HAST BY THY GIFT  
HARMONIZED MY TONGUE FOR THY PRAISE !”

S. EPHRAEM, *in natalem Domini.*

# METRICAL HYMNS.

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## I.

### On the Death of a Child.

MOTIVES FOR RESTRAINING SORROW.

(CANON XXXVI., tom. vi., p. 293.)

OH my Son, tenderly beloved !  
Whom grace fashioned<sup>a</sup>  
In his mother's womb,  
And divine goodness completely formed.<sup>a</sup>  
He appeared in the world  
Suffering like a flower ;<sup>b</sup>  
And Death put forth a heat  
More fierce than the sun,  
And scattered its leaves  
And withered it, that it ceased to be.



I fear to weep for thee,  
Because I am instructed  
That the Son of the Kingdom<sup>c</sup> hath removed thee  
To His bright habitation.

Nature, in its fondness,  
Disposes me to tears,  
Because, my son, of thy departure.  
But when I remember the bright abode  
To which they have led thee,  
I fear lest I should defile  
The dwelling-place of the King  
By weeping, which is adverse to it ;  
And lest I should be blamed,  
For coming to the region of bliss  
With tears which belong to sadness ;  
I will therefore rejoice,  
*Approaching* with my pure offering.<sup>d</sup>

The sound of thy sweet notes  
*Once* moved me and caught mine ear,<sup>e</sup>  
And caused me much to wonder ;  
*Again* my memory listens to it,  
And is affected by the tones  
And harmonies of thy tenderness.  
But when my spirit groans aloud  
On account of these things,  
My judgment recalls me,  
And listens with admiration  
To the voices of those who live on high ;

To the song of the spiritual ones  
 Who cry aloud, Hosannah !  
 At thy marriage festival.

THIS beautiful hymn is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of fourteen lines. The reference to a flower seems to intimate that the title given, "On the Death of a Child," may be correct, although other parts of the hymn will apply to a youth. Benedict has this note, "*In Funere Puerorum*." No hymn which the writer has consulted gives a finer idea of the mind and heart of Ephraem. Nature speaks in every line, in conjunction with the sentiments taught by divine grace. It is probable that the departed was a singer in the choir, whose sweet voice touched and melted the heart of the monk. The allusion to the echoes awakened by memory in the third strophe is very affecting.

a "Fashioned," and "completely formed."—There appears to be a gradation in the Syriac, which is attempted to be preserved in the translation. ܡܕܝ is properly *figuravit, depinxit*, as in Gal. iii. 1, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ was ܡܕܝ clearly represented, or depicted." But the second word ܡܕܝ signifies *formare*, to form that, the model of which was before conceived, as the potter moulds the clay. (Rom. ix. 20, 21.)

b "Suffering like a flower."—Literally, *his passions, or susceptibilities*, ܡܕܝ (were) *those of a flower*.

c "Son of the Kingdom."—A term often used of Jesus Christ by Ephraem. The idea seems to be gathered from such texts as Luke xxii. 29, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." (See Hymn VII.)

d "Pure."—ܡܕܝ *i.e.*, an offering of gladness, unmixed with the baser matter of mere natural sorrow.

e "Caught my ear."—ܡܕܝ *knocked at my ears*.

## II.

## On the Death of Children.

THEIR BLESSEDNESS.

(CANON XLIII., tom. vi., p. 299.)

LET the little children be pledges<sup>a</sup> with Thee,  
And above, in heaven, let them be Thy guests ;  
Let them be intercessors for all of us,  
For pure is the prayer of childhood.

Blessed is He who entertains them in His pavilion.

Our Saviour took children in His arms  
And blessed them before the multitudes ;  
And shewed that He loved childhood ;  
Because it is pure and free from defilement.

Blessed is He who makes them dwell in His tabernacle.

The Just One saw that iniquity increased on earth  
And that sin had dominion over all men ;  
And sent His messenger and removed  
A multitude of fair little ones,

And called them to the pavilion of happiness.



Like lilies taken from the wilderness  
Children are planted in paradise ;  
And like pearls in diadems  
Children are inserted in the Kingdom ;


And without ceasing shall hymn forth praise.

Who will not rejoice at seeing  
 Children taken to the *heavenly* pavilion?<sup>b</sup>  
 Who will weep for childhood  
 That has fled from the snares of sin?  
 Lord! make us happy with them in *Thy* habitation.

Glory be to Him who hath taken away  
 The little ones and made them meet for Paradise;  
 Glory be to Him who hath removed children  
 And placed them in a garden of pleasures.  
 Lo! they are happy there without danger!

OCTOSYLLABIC, the strophes of five verses, the fifth antiphonal, sung either in chorus or by a separate part of the choir. (See Hymn XIII. for a note on this metre.)

<sup>a</sup> "Pledges."— *i. q.*, *δμνητία*. The undoubted meaning is *pignus*, *obses*. See Numbers xxi. 29, "*He hath given his sons  hostages unto Sihon,*" &c. Pledges entrusted to God by us and on our behalf; as is evident from the third verse, "Let them be intercessors, &c." Benedict renders it *pars tua*, *thy portion*, without any apparent reason.

<sup>b</sup> "Pavilion."— This word occurs so frequently as to render it difficult to avoid an unpleasant reiteration in the translation. The true meaning is *tent*, *tabernacle*, and the idea conveyed is one entirely oriental; the free use of synonyms is, therefore, allowable.

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## III.

## On the Death of Children.

THE SORROWS IT PRODUCES.—THE SOURCES OF  
CONSOLATION.

(CANON XXXVII., tom. vi., p. 294.)

How bitter is the grief  
For the death of childhood ;  
How grievous the separation  
Of the infant<sup>a</sup> from its mother :—  
Train it up (Lord) in Thy dwelling !

This day afflicts<sup>b</sup>  
The fathers through their sons ;  
And death now breaks  
The staff of their old age :—  
Lord ! may they lean on Thee !

This day removes  
The only child<sup>c</sup> from its mother,  
And cuts off the arm  
Which would have been her stay :—  
In Thee, Lord, may she trust !

This day separates  
The little one from its parent,  
And leaves her in the wilderness  
Of suffering and grief :—  
Do Thou, Lord, comfort her !

This day divides  
 The sucking-child from the breast ;  
 And (the mother<sup>d</sup>) wails and grieves  
 Because her intercourse with it hath perished :—  
 May she see it in the Kingdom !

O happy infancy  
 Which hath gained Paradise !  
 Alas ! for old age,  
 Which still remains in sorrow !  
 Lord, be Thou its helper !

THIS beautiful little hymn is pentasyllabic, the strophes consisting of five verses, the last being antiphonal.

<sup>a</sup> "The infant."—**לס** *infantulus, lactens*, infant or sucking-child. The same word occurs in the fifth strophe, and is rendered *sucking-child* to avoid repetition, on the principle defended in the Introduction.

<sup>b</sup> "This day afflicts."—The literal rendering of **יום ליס** ~~יום ליס~~ is, *This is the day which hath afflicted* ; and some hesitation was felt as to the propriety of giving that translation. But a further acquaintance with the same formula in other hymns gained the preference for the simpler version. This hymn was not written for a special case, but was intended for general use, when infants and children were committed to the tomb. This is indicated by the mention not only of a *sucking-child*, but also of more advanced children, so that the hymn was adapted for all who had not attained to *youth*. The case is thus brought under the rule given by Gesenius in his *Hebrew Grammar*,—"The præter is used for our present tense where this denotes a condition already long continued and still existing, or a permanent, habitual course of action ; as Psalm i. 1, 'Happy is the man who walks not (יֵלֵךְ) in the counsel of the ungodly, &c.'" That the relative **?** has often an

expletive character, *usque ad nauseam*, to use the words of Hahn, is well known to every reader of Syriac verse. Benedict uses the past tense in this hymn, but in Canon XXXIV. the present.

<sup>c</sup> "The only child."—In a specimen of this work issued by the translator, ܐܝܢܐ was rendered *the beloved one*; and, although he has altered it at the suggestion of a learned friend, he is still disposed to think the former version preferable. In Psalm xxii. 21, ܐܝܢܐ occurs, and Gesenius renders it, "*unicum, inde carissimum.*" In Genesis xxii. 2, Isaac is said to be the *only son* of Abraham (ܐܝܢܐ) which was not true in fact, and the translation of the LXX. probably conveys the exact meaning, τὸν ἀγαπητὸν, *thy beloved son*. The death of an *only* child is an occurrence too rare to warrant a reference to it in a hymn for general use, and on this ground the sense of *beloved* seems the more correct one.

<sup>d</sup> "And (the mother) wails and grieves."—There is here no nominative case expressed, and it has been suggested that ܐܡܐ *the breast*, should be supplied. ܐܡܐ is of common gender, and therefore, grammatically, might be construed with ܐܡܐ but as that would introduce a very far-fetched figure, and destroy the beauty of the prayer in the last verse of the strophe, the ellipse of the text has been preferred. Benedict makes *the mother* the nominative.

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## IV.

## On the Death of Youth.

(CANON XXXIV., tom. vi., p. 292.)

THE day of death  
Is common to all men ;  
But is bitter and grievous  
In the season of youth :—  
Comfort Thou me, O Lord !

This day are separated  
Bridegrooms and brides ;  
And instead of dancing  
There is funereal wailing :—  
Let them come to Thy marriage-feast !

The world calls thee,  
“ Go forth to labour :”  
The grave calls thee,  
“ Come, rest thou weary one :” —  
Glory be to Him who gives thee repose !

This day adorns  
The child for the sepulchre ;  
It adorns the youth also,  
Dismissing him to the tomb :—  
Let them be happy in Thy tabernacle !



Alas ! for thee, early youth !  
 The crown of old age !  
 Who hath extinguished thy beauty ?  
 And caused thy comeliness to fade ?—  
 Thou shalt rejoice in the Kingdom !

Let old age weep  
 That youth is no more !  
 Which should have been a support  
 To the ancient in days :—  
 Let it lean upon Thy power !

PENTASYLLABIC, in strophes of five verses, the last being antiphonal.

<sup>a</sup> There is a paronomasia in the text, founded on the double use of the word *ᾠὴ* to dance. Music and dancing were used at funerals as well as feasts; as (Matt. ix. 23) the minstrels made a noise on the death of the daughter of the ruler.

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## V.

## On the Death of a Young Person.

(CANON XXXV., tom. vi., p. 292.)

THIS day stimulates  
Our eyes to weeping,  
Our hands to signs of woe,  
And our mouth to lamentation :—  
Lord ! be Thou my comforter !

This day invites  
Very many to shed tears,  
For whoever enters or departs,  
His mouth is full of mourning :—  
May we be consoled by Thy goodness !

This day makes void  
The covenant of espousals,  
And in place of a bridal  
Prepares a sepulchre :—  
Let them rejoice at thy marriage-feast !

This day dismisses  
The body from life,  
And instead of sweet perfumes  
It is anointed with clay :—  
Let us be gladdened with *celestial* fragrance.

The day of death  
Is a bitter day,  
It causes all to weep  
And moves every one to sadness :—  
Lord, may we see Thy day !

This day cuts off,  
And takes away a member,  
From the united body  
Of brothers and kindred :—  
By Thee, Lord, let it be restored !

This day the fathers die,  
And are removed from us,  
And leave their children  
Orphans and dependent :<sup>b</sup>—  
Do Thou, Lord, train them up !

This day divides  
The brother from his brethren,  
And makes the number less,  
And diminishes the active members :<sup>c</sup>—  
Lord, by Thee let them be completed !

This day separates  
The husband from the wife,  
And the widow is desolate,<sup>d</sup>  
Because her companion hath ceased to be :—  
In Eden may she behold him !

This day removes  
 The friend from him he loves,  
*Like* two oxen let loose  
 From the yoke which united them :—  
 Let Thy love bind them together !

The day of thy birth  
 Made thy parents happy,  
 The day of thy death  
 Gives sorrow to thy survivors :<sup>e</sup>—  
 In Eden may they see thee !

THIS hymn, like the two former, is pentasyllabic, in strophes of five verses, the last being antiphonal. With Benedict it is entitled, "On the Death of a Young Person;" but internal evidence would rather claim for it a more general designation. Almost all ages are alluded to in it. Hahn entitles it, "On the Death of the Father of a Family."

<sup>a</sup> "It is anointed with clay."—ܐܢܝܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ The only meaning given to ܐܢܝܢܐ in the Lexicons is *lutum, cænum*; but this scarcely yields a sense harmonizing with the connection. Is not ܐܢܝܢܐ the same as the Latin *sanies*? Benedict renders the passage,—"*Naturam mors solvit, unde exanime corpus Arabiâ magis ante odoratum, nunc graveolente tabo aspersum putet.*" We are glad to escape this, alas! too correct, description, in the text.

<sup>b</sup> "Dependent."—ܐܢܝܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ The literal meaning is *ablactus, weaned*, 1 Sam. i. 24, "*And when she had weaned him.*" The collateral idea, *deprived of the natural sources of support, and therefore dependent on others*, may justify the translation of the text.

<sup>c</sup> "The active members."—ܐܢܝܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ literally *the fingers*. No allusion to this metaphor is found in the Lexicons.

<sup>d</sup> "The widow is desolate."—ܐܢܝܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ the *rib* is barren. Benedict, "*Casta manebit vidua.*"

<sup>e</sup> "Survivors."—ܐܢܝܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ heirs.

## VI.

## On the Death of a Private Person.

(CANON XXV., tom. vi., p. 275.)

“ I AM going away, and fear not,  
For my Lord calleth to me, ‘ Come, and I will  
crown thee !’  
He placeth a wreath of glory on my head  
And maketh me happy.”

The angels who removed thee from us  
Have conducted thee to Eden ;  
They have given thee as an offering to thy Creator,  
Depart in peace !

An abundant treasure  
Full of good things, make ready for thy servant,  
And let his spirit rest in peace  
In the midst of the kingdom.

The cornet sounds  
And the voice of the trumpet waxeth loud,  
And the dead live again, and rise up  
From their sepulchres.

The righteous fly  
Upon the clouds to meet their Lord,  
And enter with Him into the habitation  
Which is full of joys.

Thy garland is twined  
In Eden, O thou blessed one,<sup>a</sup>  
From amaranthine flowers,  
In the midst of the Kingdom.

Glory be to the living voice  
Which speaks in thunders in the midst of Hades ;<sup>b</sup>  
And the dead hear it and arise again  
From their burial places.

In the day when the trumpet sounds,  
Make me meet, O Lord,  
To sing Thy praise worthily—  
In the day of the resurrection.

Depart in peace,  
O beloved fruit<sup>c</sup> which Death hath plucked !  
Abraham comes forth to meet thee,  
And bids thee welcome.

The gate of Paradise  
Opens and expects thee to enter,  
That thou mayest rest and be happy  
To all eternity.

Let praise ascend, O Lord,  
To Thee from all Thy creatures,  
For Thou gatherest from every place  
The rebellious children of Adam.<sup>d</sup>

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THE metre of this hymn is tetrasyllabic in the first and fourth verses, heptasyllabic in the second and third ; the strophes of four verses each. The title given by Benedict is, *In Funere Clericorum*. But there appears nothing in the hymn itself to confine it to a particular class.

<sup>a</sup> "Thou blessed one."—ܐܒܪܗܡ is frequently applied to departed saints ; thus the Syriac translator of the *Festal Letters of Athanasius* speaks of *the blessed Moses, the blessed Esther, &c.* (Cureton's text, p. 33.) It corresponds to the Greek ὁ μακάριτος. In more recent ecclesiastical language ܐܒܪܗܡ has the sense of *pious, devout*, and is often used as a noun for *a monk*. (See Hymn VIII.)

<sup>b</sup> "Hades."—ܫܥܠ sheol ; this word will always be rendered Hades in these translations, unless the sense of *the grave* is plainly intended.

<sup>c</sup> "O beloved fruit."—If there were any ambiguity in the word translated *fruit*, ܦܝܠ the unusual character of the figure would lead probably to the adoption of another term. Benedict has translated it *flos, flower*, but contrary to all authority. The expression, however, is exceedingly natural and of great beauty. In Hymn I. a child is compared to a flower, on account of its beauty and liability to decay ; here, one of advanced life is called fruit, to designate maturity and usefulness.

<sup>d</sup> "The rebellious children of Adam."—Sy., ܕܐܝܬܐ ܕܐܕܡ the rebellion, or apostacy, of Adam.

## VII.

## On the Death of a Presbyter.

(CANON IX., tom. vi., p. 236.)

My brethren and beloved,  
By God who hath separated me from you  
*I pray*, that when your choirs assemble,  
In holy service, ye will remember me.  
And let your prayer come  
And lighten the dust from my eyes,  
That I may stand up and give thanks  
To the raiser of the dead.

Even in Hades will arise  
The Sun of Righteousness,  
Dispersing the darkness of death  
And bringing me out of it ;  
And those who sleep will be aroused  
From their sepulchres as from repose,  
And will offer praise at the rising day,  
Which gladdens them with its beams.

Alas ! for the slothful,  
Who like me have been unprofitable !  
In that day He who hired them  
Will pay them their due ;  
And every one will receive righteously



What his labour hath gained.  
Regard favourably my request  
As *that* of the thief upon the cross !

I have entered upon the trodden pathway  
That I may go to the habitation of the living,  
To the place where the upright,  
Receive the reward of their toils ;  
Where wages are appointed for thee,  
Even the just recompense of thy anxieties.  
There, beneath the wings  
Of thy prayer may we find shelter !

In the region of felicity  
The righteous dwell as thou dost ;  
Where there is nothing to fear,  
No cause for dread or trepidation.  
Where sorrows are far away,  
And afflictions and sighs.  
There, O Son of the Kingdom,<sup>a</sup>  
Count me worthy to see Thy face !

The wings of righteous deeds  
I have not been preparing from my youth ;  
Those light pinions  
I have not furnished to myself.  
And what shall I do, who must pass over<sup>b</sup>  
The sea of burning flame ?  
How shall I be able  
To soar high above it ?

The wings of supplication  
Which are swifter than air,  
And the pinions of angels  
Of whom thou hast been a companion—  
They shall conduct thee  
To the confines of the firmament,  
Where there cannot approach  
A breath of the burning flame !

THIS hymn is composed of verses of five and seven syllables alternately, in strophes of eight verses. More than one speaker is introduced, sometimes the dead, at others the living ; but it is difficult to apportion his part to each. It is left to the reader to arrange the parts of the dialogue. The Latin title is, *In funere Presbyterorum*.

<sup>a</sup> " Son of the Kingdom."—(See Hymn I.)

<sup>b</sup> " Who must pass over."—Observe the difference of the terms here, and in Hymn XIII.

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## VIII.

## On the Death of a Bishop.

(CANON II., tom. vi., p. 228.)

Who will not rejoice  
That this blessed one hath triumphed ?  
Who will not weep  
That the conqueror hath departed ?  
Who was the salt of our souls.<sup>a</sup>

Since the hour of death  
Cannot be avoided,  
Let your tears cease to flow,  
But exalt your voices high  
In praise of the hero.<sup>b</sup>

Make your psalms abundant ;  
Give thanks to Him who hath taken him away,  
And praise Him who hath separated him *from us*,  
And placed him in the bosom  
Of the upright who were his friends.

Thou wert the companion of the chaste,  
And the brother of the perfect ;  
The image of *good* men of olden time ;  
The exemplar of such as have finished their course :—  
With them mayest thou delight thyself !

Thy Lord hath bestowed upon thee  
An abiding habitation,

Because thy youth rejected  
A transitory home ;—  
In Eden mayest thou be happy !

The day of thy birth<sup>d</sup>  
Was known *only* to thy Lord ;  
The day of thy death  
Is known to all men :—  
It hath prepared for thee great felicity.<sup>e</sup>


No more does there exist  
The burden of thy mortal part ;  
Thy portion henceforth  
Is in the midst of Paradise :—  
Glory be to Him who hath chosen thee !

Thy Lord was at all times  
Before thine eyes ;  
And thou didst haste diligently  
To the mark set before thee :—  
To that hath He removed thee.

Who will not weep  
Because of thy departure ?  
Who will not rejoice  
Because the crown is thine ?  
Glory be to Him who hath chosen thee !


PENTASYLLABIC, in strophes of five verses, the last being anti-  
phonal.

<sup>a</sup> "Who was the salt of our souls."—Many conjectural illustrations of this expression might be given, but the reference is probably to our Lord's declaration, *Ye are the salt of the earth*, (Matt. v. 13.)

<sup>b</sup> "In praise of the hero."— the Greek *Αθλητής*; but as this expresses more the act of wrestling or striving, while the departed was a conqueror, *hero* is preferable.

<sup>c</sup> "A transitory home."—This is all the text conveys. Benedict construes it into a state of celibacy, "*Quidni Dominus juberet obsep̄tam in ipso ætatis flore jugalis tori jucunditatem*," &c.

<sup>d</sup> "The day of thy birth."—The meaning of this strophe is somewhat obscure. There appears to be a contrast between the entrance of a child into the world, an event known to few; and the departure of the same from life, after a course of public usefulness, an event known to many.

<sup>e</sup> "Great felicity."—Sy.,  *happinesses*; the emphatic plural, of which there are many instances in these hymns.

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## IX.

## On the Death of a Deacon.

(CANON XIII., tom. vi., p. 247.)

BEHOLD ! our member is departed  
From this troubled world,  
To that tranquil light ;  
On his departure let us pray :—  
That his Guide may have mercy on him !

Well disciplined in public duties  
He was chaste in private life,  
In gentleness and peace  
He abounded towards his brethren :—  
Make him happy in Thy tabernacle !

His eyes were watchful  
In standing before Thee ;  
And they wept in prayer,  
And made entreaty for his sins :—  
May they see Thy loving-kindness !

Thou didst count him worthy  
To minister in Thy sanctuary,  
And to distribute<sup>a</sup> Thy body  
And Thy blood to Thy flock :—  
Nourish him with Thy lambs !


He was cheerful, and full  
 Of affection to his brethren;  
 And his hospitality  
 Was fervent in its tenderness :<sup>b</sup>—  
 Number him with Thy beloved ones !

He loved to proclaim  
 The words of Thy doctrine,  
 And delighted to listen to  
 The utterances of the Spirit :—  
 Let him hear the sound of the trumpet !

He wondered at and admired  
 The riches of Thy oracles ;  
 And his heart exulted  
 In the words of the Holy Ghost :—  
 Unite him with Thy glorified ones !

He despised worldly pleasures  
 And slighted ease ;  
 Let him rest at Thy table—  
 Let him find enjoyment in Thy light—  
 With the upright who have loved Thee !

PENTASYLLABIC, in strophes of five verses, the last verse of each being antiphonal.

<sup>a</sup> “ To distribute.”—  *divisit, peculiariter in duas partes,*  
 Castel. Benedict has *porrigere*, to extend, to hold out to.

<sup>b</sup> Or, in his charity hospitality was fervent.

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## X.

## A Prayer in the Prospect of Death.

(CANON LXI., tom. vi., p. 326.)

O LORD ! appoint me not a place with the wicked ;  
Do Thou, Lord, confess me who have confessed Thee ;  
Set me not on *Thy* left hand,  
Lest I become a companion to Satan !

Let me not lift up my voice in the flame,  
Who by hymns have praised Thee ;  
Let me not cry out from the midst of darkness,  
Who in the night-season have glorified Thee.

Number me not with Thy crucifiers,  
Thou, whose cross was my refuge ;  
Let not my head be humbled in judgment,  
O Thou Judge, greater than *all* judges !

THE above is heptasyllabic, in strophes of four verses.



## XI.

## On the Death of a Private Person.

(CANON LXXXII., tom. vi., p. 356.)

GLORIOUS and terrible is the day of Thy appearing  
When Thou fliest through the vault of the firmament,  
And the sublime gates are opened  
Before the splendour of Thy power.  
The gates of high heaven, and of the depth beneath,  
And of the firmament, cover their faces ;  
And the archangel, Gabriel,  
Expands the banner of Thy cross,  
To the glory and exultation  
Of the children of the faithful Church :  
But to the shame and sorrow  
Of Heathendom and Judaism.  
And Thou shalt shout with Thy mighty voice,  
And the bosom of the grave shall be emptied,  
And the dead shall rise incorruptible ;  
And all nations, peoples, and tongues  
Shall cry, " Glory be to Thee !"

In the great day of Thy appearing  
The cornet and the trumpet shall sound,  
And the angels shall descend from their seats  
And sing psalms of praise to God.  
Then quickly shall be awakened  
Those who slept, and render praise


With their exulting voices.  
And those who have done good,  
Shall enter with Him into the pavilion ;  
And the door shall be closed  
In the faces of the wicked.  
Lord, let not the door of Thy compassion  
Be shut against me !  
Glory be to Thee !


Our brother is taken from our congregation,  
Let us all honour his death earnestly ;  
Let us enter and entreat from the merciful God  
In whose hands is our death and our life,  
That He will bring him to the region of light  
With the upright who are accepted in His presence.  
And that he may hear Him say to him,  
“Come, enter and inherit the kingdom  
Which cannot pass away !”<sup>a</sup>  
Which Christ hath prepared for the elect who have  
loved Him,  
In a world abounding in blessedness.

How lamentable is thy death  
And grievous thy departure ;  
And there is sorrow to all men  
Because of thy removal ;  
For thou hast migrated from thy abode  
And gone to the place of strangers.  
According to the word of the preacher  
“That every one who does not suffer for me

Hath not life in himself,"<sup>a</sup>  
 Now that thou hast perfected  
 The commandment of thy gracious Lord,  
 He will make thee rest with Him  
 In the unfading habitation of light !

THIS hymn is heptasyllabic, but very irregular, both in the verses and the strophes. There is some internal evidence that two fragments are united in one piece. The second strophe ends with a doxology, "Glory be to Thee;" and the third introduces a new subject.

<sup>a</sup> "Come enter and inherit, &c."—This appears to be a combination of two texts of Scripture: Matt. xxv. 34, and Heb. xii. 28. The word  *inherit*, seems to identify the former.

<sup>b</sup> "According to the word of the preacher."—There can be no question that this is intended to be a quotation, although there is no passage of Scripture exactly like it. If the reading  *on my account*, is the correct one, some statement of our Lord would appear to be indicated. The sentiment is contained in an affirmative form in 2 Tim. ii. 12, "*If we suffer we shall also reign with Him*;" and Rom. viii. 17, "*If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.*" It is remarkable that St. Paul introduces the first text as though it were a quotation: "*The saying is faithful.*" Perhaps Ephraem and the Apostle both refer to some traditional sayings of our Lord, many of which must have circulated in the early Church; like that quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus, *Γίνεσθε δοκιμοὶ τραπεζίται, Be ye skilful money-changers.*

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## XII.

## The Parting of Body and Soul.

(CANON LIX., tom. vi., p. 325.)

THE soul having left the body,<sup>a</sup>  
Is in great suffering,  
And feels much grief ;  
And she is distracted  
Hither and thither,  
As to her destination ;  
For the evil spirits desire  
That she should go with them  
Into the midst of Gehennah ;  
And the angels also,  
That she should journey with them,  
To the region of light.

In that moment,  
The soul lightly esteems  
Her beloved friends and brethren,  
Those whom she held dear,  
And her neighbours,  
And those with whom she was familiar.  
In that *hour* she despises  
Whatsoever appertains to riches,  
Or worldly possessions ;  
But respecting her trespasses  
She has great anxiety,  
They being so many.

Then the soul standing separate  
 Above the body *she hath left*,  
 Speaks thus to it,—  
 “Death hath dismissed me  
 Remain thou here in peace  
 For I am going away.”  
 Then the body replies,—  
 “Depart thou in peace,  
 O soul tenderly loved !  
 The Lord who hath fashioned us,  
 He will procure our deliverance  
 From Gehennah !”

THE metre is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of twelve verses. The construction is very regular, the third line of the second strophe excepted, which contains six syllables.

a “The soul having left the body.”—*ἡ ψυχή ἀφῆκε τὸ σῶμα* literally, *the soul rising*. The same form occurs in the first line of the third strophe. The verb *ἵσταναι* is often used of the Resurrection, as Mark xii. 26. The soul rises from the body, now prostrated by death, as the body itself will rise at the last day. Benedict renders, “*Animus corpore solutus*.”

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## XIII.

## Hymn on the Resurrection.

(CANON XLII, tom. vi., p. 298.)

WHEN the air of the Resurrection shall breathe softly,  
The bones of the righteous shall be gathered together;<sup>a</sup>  
And at the voice of the trumpet they shall arise,  
By the power of God which causeth them to stand up.

In the day when the righteous shall awake,  
The heaven and the earth will be made new ;  
And *men* will give an account of themselves,  
And the children of the bridechamber<sup>b</sup> shall not be  
found wanting.

The perfect shall exult in the kingdom,  
And be united with the angels ;  
And hearing the loud sound of the trumpet,  
Shall overthrow death with songs of triumph.

When the rising of the righteous is manifested,  
Evil men and deceivers shall be condemned ;  
In fire and darkness they shall be tormented,  
Who in their arrogancy despised the upright.

When they come to the gate of Paradise,  
Of its own accord it shall open to them ;  
The guarding cherub<sup>c</sup> shall salute them worshipfully,  
Playing on his harp and coming to meet them.

They see the bridegroom when he is revealed  
 And cometh from the East with rejoicings ;  
 He will give them wings, and without delay,  
 They will fly through the air and worship him.

“ Come, enter ye children of the light !”  
 Jesus will cry to His beloved ones in that hour :  
 “ Receive your crowns, *the reward* of your labour,  
 Ye heirs of an everlasting kingdom !”

Both the just and the unjust shall pass through<sup>d</sup>  
 The fire which is to try them, and shall be proved  
                   by it ;  
 The righteous pass and *the flame* is quiet,  
 But it burneth the wicked and snatcheth them away.

Solitary is Hades—it hath become a desolate land !  
 The graves are opened and emptied ;  
 And the children of Adam rise from the dust,  
 And the creatures<sup>e</sup> ascend to their Lord !

THIS hymn is octosyllabic, in strophes of four lines each. It is regular in its construction, although it has some marked synæreses. Thus, the first line of the last strophe consists of *ten* syllables instead of eight. This octosyllabic metre is of comparatively rare occurrence in Ephraem ; but the present is an undoubted example. (See also Hymn II.)

<sup>a</sup> There is here a plain reference to Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, (chap. xxxvii.) Ephraem, in his comment on that passage, says, “ The Spirit of God discovers to Ezekiel the future resur-

rection of the dead." (tom. v., p. 194.) The use of the word ܐܝܝ instead of ܐܝܠܐ in this, and other places, arises partly from an effort of the language to gain copiousness; ܐܝܝ being the Greek word *ἀήρ*; partly perhaps from the greater sanctity attached to ܐܝܠܐ as the name of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>b</sup> "The children of the bridechamber."—ܡܬܢܝܢ ܕܥܠܝܝܐ the expression used in the Peschito, Matt. ix. 15.

<sup>c</sup> The words are taken from Gen. iii. 24. The word for cherub is plural in the Hebrew text, but here and in the Peschito it is singular. On the passage in Genesis, Ephraem says, "The guard of Paradise was a living being, acting voluntarily," (tom. iv., p. 39.)

<sup>d</sup> "Shall pass through."—ܡܬܠܝܡ ܡܬܠܝܡ a different construction from that rendered "passing over," in Hymn VII., and elsewhere.

<sup>e</sup> "The creatures ascend."—This general statement acquires a more definite form by comparing it with Romans viii. 22. There, as here, the plural ܡܬܠܝܡ is used; the context in both places limiting the expression to mankind. Benedict evades the difficulty by leaving the passage untranslated.



## XIV.

# On the Funeral of a Prince or a Rich Man.

(CANON XXVIII., tom. vi., p. 277.)

I ASKED *impartial* Justice,<sup>a</sup>  
“To whom does this tomb belong?  
And who was he who lies in it?  
For there is here nothing to distinguish him from  
others.”

Then an answer was returned to me  
By Justice, respecting my enquiry :—  
“Here a king is buried, who was renowned ;  
Draw nigh and contemplate his humiliation.  
And near him a poor beggar is interred,  
And behold, one cannot be known from the other.”

And as I departed by the door  
I first saw the beggar ;  
Who lay there low upon the ground,  
And on his head was great sadness.<sup>b</sup>

For upon it the spider had spun her web,  
And his body lay in the dust ;  
His teeth were loosened from the gums,<sup>c</sup>  
And his mouth was filled with ashes.

His bones had put off their fleshly clothing,  
And were become dust and clay.

Now when I saw the beggar,  
In this great humiliation ;  
I thought with myself, that a king of nations  
Could not be so low as he.

I reflected, that as when living here,  
A king is greater than a beggar,  
So even in the sepulchre,  
His corpse would be treated with honour.

*But* instead of his great exaltation,  
Misery is now his guest ;  
And in the place of his high throne,  
His body is prostrate in the dust.

Instead of his sweet perfumes,  
His head hath become corruption ;  
Instead of all his magnificence,  
He is turned to clay in the tomb.

Then I groaned in myself and said,  
Alas ! how is haughtiness humbled !  
And what a low estate is prepared  
To bring down pride !

For whether he be a king or a beggar,  
Each reposes in the tomb and is no better than the other.

Let not man confide in his wealth,  
For riches here forsake him ;  
Let him not trust in his possessions,  
For they cannot descend with him to the grave.

Let not man confide in his comeliness,  
For his beauty shall fade away in the tomb.

I considered the devouring grave,<sup>d</sup>  
Which is full, yet not satisfied ;  
And, however many dead go down to it,  
Its bosom becomes yet wider.

Untold thousands lie there,  
The rich and the poor together ;  
For I saw great multitudes,  
Lying together without confusion.

They are all silent,  
Without a sound or a movement ;  
No one can raise himself up,  
To go forth to his neighbour.

The mighty ones have no power  
To possess anything in the grave ;  
The proud and the arrogant are not able,  
To exalt themselves about their fellows.

Those who delighted in pleasures,  
Cannot there live luxuriously ;

Nor those who loved Mammon,  
Occupy themselves with usurious gains.

The king is buried and his gold with him ;  
They are both alike useless ;  
The rich man is buried with his treasures,  
And he is unable to employ them.

The unjust man is buried with his evil deed,  
And Gehennah keeps watch over him ;  
The righteous is buried with his affliction,  
And Paradise expects him.<sup>e</sup>

The poor is buried with his alms,<sup>f</sup>  
And the kingdom awaits him.

I desired to examine the remains,  
Of the wealthy and of the poor,  
To see whether the bones of the rich,  
Are more beautiful than those of poor men.

But as the comeliness of the fair hath ceased,  
So hath haughtiness and arrogance ;  
Those are naked who were clothed in white raiment,<sup>g</sup>  
And are turned to blackness.<sup>h</sup>

Those lie there who improved their complexions,<sup>i</sup>  
And artfully disguised their faces ;<sup>k</sup>  
Those lie there who painted their eyelids,<sup>l</sup>  
And the worm corrodes their eyes.<sup>m</sup>

Those lie there who wrought uncleanness,  
 And have become abominable clay ;  
 Those lie there who loved arrogancy,  
 And are as though they existed not.

Those lie there who loved pride,  
 And are become a loathsome spectacle ;  
 Those lie there who loved to have dominion,  
 And they are prostrate on their faces.

The cultivators of letters lie there,  
 But their wit has failed them ;  
 There lie the lovers of despicable riches,  
 And are without daily bread.

There lie those who were enemies,  
 And their bones are mingled together !

THE above is perhaps more a metrical homily than a hymn, partaking however of the character of both kinds of composition. It is heptasyllabic, in strophes of four verses, intermixed, without any apparent rule, with some of only two. The translator has followed the exact arrangement of the printed text, in the absence of manuscript authority. It is however to be suspected that the whole piece is intended to be uniform, and that the order has been disarranged by a transcriber. But it would be unwise to speak too positively on this subject, while the whole subject of the Syrian hymnology is so little understood.

“ Impartial justice.”—This is a somewhat paraphrastic expression for the Syriac word ܡܝܬܪܐ although its exact meaning would not be conveyed by the English *justice*. Its precise signification is *rectitudo*, *rectitude*, or *uprightness*, involving the idea

of impartiality. Benedict gives more precision and life to the *Prosopopeia*, by translating "*Justitiam sepulcro assidentem contemplatus, rogabam*,"—probably using *assidentem* in a forensic sense. (See Hymn XXXV., strophe 1.)

b "And on his head was great sadness."—Sy., ܐܬܠܐ ܕܥܠ ܪܝܫܗ *a great mourning*. As the Latins use *luctus* in the sense of *funeral weeds*,—in *luctu esse*, *to be in mourning*, so ܐܬܠܐ may have the same meaning. There will then be an allusion to the web which the spider had woven on the skull.

c "His teeth were loosened from the gums."—Literally, *were divested of their skin*. The words in Job xix. 20, "*the skin of my teeth*," literally agree, in the *Peschito*, with those in Ephraem.

d "Devouring grave."—ܫܥܠܐ *sheol*, here and in other places in this hymn, is not rendered by Hades, because the connexion seems to demand the more limited signification. The physical, not the moral condition of the dead is the topic of discourse.

e "Gehennah keeps watch over him—Paradise expects him."—By these two bold personifications Ephraem strongly states the doctrine of Holy Scripture, that no *moral* change takes place after death; but that however long the final award may be deferred, it will take its character from the state of the soul on leaving the world.

f "The poor is buried with his alms."—ܐܬܠܐ ܕܥܠ ܪܝܫܗ the word used for *alms*, is from ܕܢܐ *justum, æquum fuit*; and is used by the *Peschito* for *δικαιοσύνη* in Matt. vi. 1; the ideas of *justice*, and *clemency*, or *benevolence* being used as cognate in many languages.

g "Clothed in white raiment."—ܒܫܬܝܬ ܒܝܠܐ *white (garments)*. The same word is used in John xx. 12. Benedict renders it *bysus*, fine linen; and probably the quality as well as the colour is here alluded to.

h "Turned to blackness."—Literally, *are become the colour of coals*.

i "Improved their complexions."—Sy., *polished*. The word ܬܪܝܬ is *tersit, excolivit*, and in Aphel, *lavit*. The two ideas together describe the care taken to improve the skin by cosmetics.

k "Artfully disguised their faces"—*i.e.*, by the use of pigments,

intended to heighten or lessen the colour, according to the conventional standard of beauty. One meaning of **كاذب** is *fraudulenter egit in aliquem*. Benedict translates this and the former verse,—“*Qui pigmentis formam mentiri solebant.*”

<sup>l</sup> “Painted their eyelids.”—Sy. **زكاه خنتس** adorned their eyes. Benedict, “*Oculos stibio ante renidentes.*”

<sup>m</sup> “And the worm corrodes their eyes.”—Literally, *sucks, derives nourishment from*. Benedict, “*Serpente tinea corrosos ac populatos oculos.*”

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## XV.

# Christ the Companion of the Disembodied Soul.

(CANON LXXXI., tom. vi., p. 355.)

As my provision for my journey<sup>a</sup> I have taken Thee,  
 Oh Thou Son of God !  
 And when I am hungry I will eat of Thee,  
 Thou Saviour of the world !  
 The fire will keep far off from my members,  
 Perceiving in me the savour of Thy body and blood.  
 Baptism shall become to me  
 A ship which cannot sink ;<sup>b</sup>  
 And I shall see Thee there, oh Lord,  
 In the day of the resurrection.<sup>c</sup>

I was living in my place of sojourn  
 (Thus speaks the soul),  
 But the Master of the house sent to me,  
 And I am not permitted to continue.  
 The messenger thus addressed me :—  
 “ Depart from the house and vacate its chambers ! ”  
 Oh my body, my temporary home,  
 Remain here in peace !  
 And in the day of the resurrection  
 I shall see thee rejoicing.



The lictors came with speed,  
But I was ignorant of it ;  
The messenger stood at the door,  
But I did not perceive him ;  
Deliver me, Lord, from the judgment of the devil,  
Who hateth Thy renowned children ;  
And with Thy holy ones may I attain  
To the house of the kingdom ;  
That I may utter a song of praise,  
And with them glorify Thee.

How bitter is this cup  
Which death hath mingled !  
And how terrible is the time,  
And how grievous the hour,  
Which calleth for Thee !  
The soul saith to the body,  
“ Remain thou here in peace,  
O much loved habitation,  
In which I once dwelt  
While the Lord was willing.”

How saddened is the sinner  
In his heart at that hour,  
When the king Messiah shall sit  
Upon His dreadful judgment-seat ;  
And all tribes shall stand before Him,  
And all secrets of the heart shall be revealed.

Terrible is the tribunal !  
 Terrible is the Judge, and that season !  
 Blessed is he whom Thy favour  
 Shall protect, oh Lord !

THIS interesting hymn is heptasyllabic and tetrasyllabic in alternate verses. The strophes, as divided in the printed text, contain ten verses each, except the two last, the former of which is deficient, and the latter redundant in the number of verses. There is either much confusion in the arrangement of these portions, or the harmony has to be elicited by rules as yet undiscovered.

a "My provision for my journey."—ܡܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ *a viaticum*, occurs in Gen. xlii. 25 ; in the English version, "*provision for the way.*" (See Hymn XXIV.)

δ "A ship which cannot sink."—An evident allusion to 1 Peter iii. 21, "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us," the ark being the type, baptism the antitype. It is true that the *Textus Receptus* by ᾠ ἀντίτυπον, makes *water* the type, but the reading adopted by Tischendorf, ὁ ἀντίτυπον, allows the interpreter to refer to the *ark* as the emblem of baptism. The *Peshito* leaves the matter doubtful.

c "In the day of the resurrection."—This strophe gives a succinct description of the views of Ephraem as to the state of the soul after death, which are alluded to and amplified in many of the hymns. A journey has to be undertaken, and the course leads to a sea or lake of flame, which must be passed before the resurrection is attained to. By the body and blood of Christ the fiery waves would be innocuous, and by the ship of baptism, the soul would safely pass the terrible abyss. (Compare Hymns XIII. and XXI.)

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## XVI.

## On the Death of a Monk.

(CANON XVII., tom. vi., p. 262.)

His lips have sung  
The psalms of the Spirit :<sup>a</sup>  
Pardon his offences,  
And let him shout aloud in Thy kingdom :—  
“ Glory be to Him who had mercy on me !”

He bore in early youth  
Thy pleasant yoke :  
Break off and cast from him  
The fetters of sin ;—  
And make him happy in Thy tabernacle !

He voluntarily denied himself  
The pleasures of a temporal home ;<sup>b</sup>  
And desired earnestly the dwelling  
Prepared for the perfect :—  
Unite him with the perfect ones !

He laboured to reconcile  
Brethren who were angry *with each other*,  
And brought them together  
For good, in Thy habitation :<sup>c</sup>—  
Let his dwelling-place be in Eden.

He ministered to his fellow-servants,  
As Thou didst command him ;<sup>d</sup>  
And made himself to be  
The last of all men :—

Let him sit down at Thy table !

He confessed Thee, oh Lord,  
Before the children of men ;  
Confess him also  
Before Thy Father :—

According as Thou hast promised.<sup>e</sup>

Do good to him in Thy loving-kindness,  
And forgive his trespasses ;  
Thou who alone art good,  
And the pardoner of offences :—  
Forgive his trespasses !<sup>f</sup>

Infirmities oppressed him  
In the time of his old age ;  
Do Thou renew his youth<sup>g</sup>  
In the Eden of pleasures :—  
Give him life in Thy tabernacle !

And as even in old age  
And bodily infirmity,  
He was constantly devoted  
To the service of Thy house :—  
Let him praise Thee with the upright !

THIS hymn is very exact in its composition. It is pentasyllabic, in strophes of five verses, the last being antiphonal. The syntactical construction is a little altered in the translation to avoid the use of the pronoun Him at the beginning of each strophe.

<sup>a</sup> "The psalms of the Spirit."—This sentence admits of two interpretations. It may mean *the inspired Psalms*, referring to those in the Old Testament; or it may signify *spiritual songs* generally, productions of a spiritual character, embodying the feelings of the heart. The expression ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ is in the Peschito version of Ephesians v. 19, for the ὑδαὶς πνευματικαῖς of the *Textus Receptus*. Tischendorf omits πνευματικαῖς in his edition of 1841, but restores it in that of 1849.

<sup>b</sup> "The pleasures of a temporal home."—The Syriac is more definite in its allusion to celibacy. Benedict translates:—"Celibem, et quique a nuptiali hujus temporis thalamo abstinuit."

<sup>c</sup> "For good, in Thy habitation."—The desirableness of inspecting and comparing MSS. is illustrated in this verse. As it is divided in the printed copy the passage would read—

He laboured to reconcile  
Brethren who were angry with each other  
And brought them together  
For good:  
In Thy habitation let his dwelling-place be in Eden.

Besides the awkwardness of the sentiment of the last verse which this arrangement produces, it gives *three* syllables to the fourth verse and *seven* to the fifth, instead of five to each. Probably the ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ in the fourth verse means the monastery or convent to which the deceased monk belonged:—*he brought the brethren to a state of peace for good in Thy convent*. This makes a good sense, and restores the harmony of the text, interrupted by the printed pointing. That ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ means a monastery is undoubted. See Bernstein's *Lexicon in loc.*, and Michaelis's note in Castell. Benedict evades the difficulty.

<sup>d</sup> "As Thou didst command him."—The reference is to Luke xxii. 26:—"Let him that is chief among you be as he that serveth," compared with verse 30:—"That ye may sit at my table," &c.

e "As Thou hast promised."—See Matt. x. 32. As Ephraem distinctly employs the sentiment of this text, it is worth examination whether he quotes the Syriac version accurately or from memory. The principal words of the sentence are found to correspond very closely with the *Peschito*, except that rendered *Father*. In the *Peschito* it is ܐܒܝ the word always used to designate the Father; in Ephraem it is ܐܒܝܐ *genitor, the begetter*; which is only once found in the New Testament, 1 John v. 1; and is there applied to the Father only by a logical process:—"every one that loveth Him that begat." The way in which Ephraem was constantly occupied with doctrinal controversies, sufficiently explains his use of the rarer formula.

f "Forgive his trespasses."—The repetition of this prayer in one strophe, is a strong proof that the last line of this hymn is antiphonal.

g "Do Thou renew his youth."—Literally, *make his old age young again*.

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## XVII.

## On the Death of a Woman.

(CANON XXXII., tom. vi., p. 288.)

TEARS are in the eyes,  
In the ears are sounds of woe,  
In the mouth is wailing,  
And sadness in the heart :—  
    Comfort me, oh Lord !

This day separates  
A woman from her house,  
And it bows down and falls prostrate,<sup>a</sup>  
Having lost its order :—  
    Let it be arranged by Thy light !

This day hath clothed  
This house in mourning,  
And hung upon its walls  
Affliction and sadness :—  
    Let Thy consolation give it light !

In the day of her birth she became mortal ;<sup>b</sup>  
In her life there was trouble ;  
The day of her death *caused* mourning  
To the company of her friends :—  
    Glory to Him who hath taken her away !

In the grave which hath swallowed up  
 The dead of all generations,  
 Her body sees corruption,  
 And becomes but dust :—  
 Let Thy resurrection raise her up !

Death hath entered—hath snatched her away,  
 And put her forth from her dwelling,  
 And in the habitation of the tomb  
 Hath deposited her :—  
 Till the day of her rising.

Her soul hath gone away,  
 As Thy command hath decreed ;  
 Behold ! she hath become dust,  
 As Thy command hath decreed :<sup>c</sup>—  
 Lord, make her live anew !

THE metre is pentasyllabic, in strophes of five verses, the last being antiphonal.

<sup>a</sup> “ And it bows down and falls prostrate.”—The translator in vain endeavoured to lessen the harshness of this figure, or to deduce any other meaning from the original **اذا انما**. The words would apply to a tent, which in the absence of the mistress might have its pegs loosened and its lines relaxed, but this idea is scarcely reconcilable with historical truth, or with the rest of the poem. Benedict renders the verse, “ *Domus idcirco tota jacet, squalido turpis situ.*”

<sup>b</sup> “ In the day of her birth she became mortal.”—Literally, *there was death.*



*c* "As Thy command hath decreed."—The reiteration of this verse in the last strophe is an indication of some artistic design, to be developed by the choir. A writer so diffuse as Ephraem would otherwise scarcely have allowed the tautology.

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## XVIII.

## On the Death of an aged Man.

(CANON LXXIV., tom. vi., p. 345.)

THE only-begotten Son whom thou hast loved  
 From thy youth to thine old age,  
 Will remember thee in Eden,  
 Among the upright and righteous.

Thou wast perfect in thy faith,  
 And chaste in thine aspect;<sup>a</sup>  
 Behold thy honourable name is diffused  
 Among us as a sweet odour.<sup>b</sup>

Behold thy communion is with the angels,  
 And thy memorial in Paradise;  
 And with a crown of glory thou art adorned  
 In the heavenly Jerusalem.

The voice which called to Lazarus,  
 And to the maid,<sup>c</sup> the daughter of Jairus,  
 Will call thee and raise thee up,  
 And clothe thee with spotless glory.<sup>d</sup>

THIS hymn is heptasyllabic, in strophes of four verses.

<sup>a</sup> "Chaste in thine aspect."—*ἡ εὐσμία*, *visus, conspectus*, has here  
 a much wider significance than any single English word can

convey. It means the appearance of a man presented to others, or the whole course of external conduct. Thus Benedict has well paraphrased it:—" *Pudicus ac decorus ubique status, incessus, vultus; oculi citra omnem petulantie notam.*" The English word *conversation* in the New Testament sense would nearly convey the idea of the Syriac text.

b "Sweet odour."—There is no *verbal* resemblance in this passage to the sentiment of Eccles. vii. 1, as it exists in the *Peschito*.

c "And to the maid."—ܬܠܝܬܐ *Talitho*, appears to be used here as a proper name. In Mark v. 41, where the raising the daughter of Jairus is related, the Syriac word is retained in a manner difficult to account for. May not Talitha have been a proper name among the Jews? If so, both the peculiarity of Mark and the phraseology of our text are explained.

d "Spotless glory."—ܬܠܝܬܐ *purus, sincerus*; here it means *unmixed, untarnished*. Benedict conveys the idea:—" *Secretis malis omnibus, cumulatâ bonorum complexione munerabitur.*"

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## XIX.

## On the Death of a Presbyter.

(CANON XLIX., tom. vi., p. 303.)

“ON my fellow ministers,<sup>a</sup>  
Keep me in remembrance,  
In the midst of the sanctuary;  
For death hath separated me,  
From your communion,  
Which was a spiritual one.”

Let it not be grievous to thee,  
Oh our beloved brother,  
That death hath removed thee from us;  
For with the holy ones,  
Thy soul shall be a companion,<sup>b</sup>  
In the Day of the Resurrection.

From thy early youth  
Thou, lord,<sup>c</sup> didst take upon thee,  
‘The yoke of thy Master;  
And He will make thee happy,  
In the pavilion of light,  
Which cannot be destroyed.

A spiritual talent,  
The good servant  
Receives from his Lord;

And in an honourable manner,  
Returns Him his gains,  
As each one hath profited.<sup>d</sup>

At the holy altar,  
At which thou didst minister,  
In spiritual things ;  
A day commemorative of thee,  
Shall be celebrated,  
Even for evermore.

Thy crown is a glorious one,  
Among the sanctified,  
In the Kingdom on High ;  
Because thou didst desire  
The love of Christ the Son,  
In the exercise of Faith.

In spiritual meditation,  
Thou didst consume thy days,  
*Living* in a pious manner ;  
Nor didst thou cease from it,  
Until thou hadst attained  
To the reward of Victory.<sup>e</sup>

To the word of Doctrine  
Which Paul uttered,<sup>f</sup>  
This prosperous one listened ;

And he also pressed forward  
To the reward of Victory,<sup>e</sup>  
In the Kingdom on High !

THE above is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of six verses.

<sup>a</sup> "My fellow ministers."—**ܠܡܨܠܐ ܠܡܨܠܐ** *children of my ministry*. Although this phrase is not found in the Lexicons, the translation given is established by the kindred expressions, *children of the city* for *fellow citizens*, *children of an inheritance* for *fellow heirs*, &c. It may be seen in Cureton's text of the *Festal Letters of Athanasius*, page ٥٨, lines 7 and 14.

<sup>b</sup> "A companion."—**ܠܡܨܠܐ** literally *a dweller*, an *inhabitant*, if as pointed in the printed text, this is the participle *paēl*, feminine, of **ܠܡܨܠܐ** *habitavit*. But **ܠܡܨܠܐ** is a *cœnobite*, from **ܠܡܨܠܐ** *a monastery*, and from the way in which Ephraem's style is tinged with monastic ideas, it is probable **ܠܡܨܠܐ** is also a *cœnobite*: "*Thy soul shall be a cœnobite with the holy*;" i.e., shall have a common dwelling with them.

<sup>c</sup> "Lord."—**ܠܡܨܠܐ** *mor*.—This word, like the Greek *κύριος*, is used by the Syrians as a title of respect. It is given especially to persons in high ecclesiastical stations, whether living or dead, and its use here may probably indicate that the hymn is for a departed Bishop, and not a Presbyter; but this is not certain. On this word, Michaelis, in Castell, has this observation, "**ܠܡܨܠܐ** *mor*, non nisi orthodoxorum nominibus præponant; hereticis, quantumvis etiam sint clari et illustres, denegent;" a fate similar to that which our word *Reverend* sometimes meets with.

<sup>d</sup> "As each one hath profited."—All the leading words in this strophe are the same as those employed in the passage referred to Matt. xxv. 14.

<sup>e</sup> "The reward of Victory."—In no Lexicon is this rendering given to **ܠܡܨܠܐ** although Schaaf quotes it in 1 Cor. ix. 24, "*one obtaineth the prize*." Equally clear is this meaning in Phil. iii. 14, "*that I may receive the prize*."

<sup>f</sup> "Which Paul uttered."—See Phil. iii. 14.

## XX.

## Necessity for Preparation for Death.

(CANON LX., tom. vi., p. 326.)


PITY me, oh Father ! in Thy tender mercy,  
And at Thy tribunal let Thy love be with me ;  
And make me to rise up from the dust,  
In the day when Thy standard<sup>a</sup> shall be revealed.  
Oh Father ! whose loving-kindness formed me,  
And who at the first fashioned our image ;<sup>b</sup>  
Let Thy nod raise our bodies again,  
In the day when the world is destroyed.

At the appearing of Jesus our King,  
The buried of all ages shall stand up ;  
His living voice shall call loudly,  
And awaken every sleeper ;  
What terror shall be to all men,  
When the thrones are set in order !  
How will the wicked be confounded,  
And all be turned into hell !<sup>c</sup>


The Day of Judgment is at hand  
And all faults shall be disclosed ;  
Who then can be pure in Thy sight,  
In the hour when the books are opened !

For there are no penitents,  
 Nor offerers of supplications ;  
 For that is the day of doom  
 In which no word nor speech is uttered !

THIS very solemn production is hexasyllabic ; a metre rarely used by Ephraem Syrus. Asseman says that he employed it, (*Bib. Or.*, i., p. 61 ;) but Hahn had not met with an instance of it. He says, (*Bardesanes*, p. 45,) "*Hexasyllaborum versuum exemplum hucusque apud Ephraemum nondum reperi, præter fragmentum Hymni Bardesanitici.*" But the present is an undoubted instance of the metre. (See also Hymn XXI.) The strophes consist of eight verses, and the structure of the hymn is very perfect.

<sup>a</sup> "Thy standard."— *signum, vexillum.* It occurs in Matt. xxiv. 30, "*Then shall be seen the sign of the Son of Man.*" (See Homily IV., note *a.*)

<sup>b</sup> "Fashioned our image."—An evident allusion to Gen. i. 27. On that passage Ephraem says, "*By the power and dominion which he received over the earth, and all that it contains, man is the image of God, who rules over all above and all below.*" An enallage of person is used in this verse, "*O Father who fashioned,*" instead of "*didst fashion.*" This, and a similar change of other persons and numbers is of common occurrence. Michaelis thus states the case:—"Syri alloquentes in secundâ personâ, post interveniens vel participium vel pronomem relativum, sermonem aliquando ex secundâ in tertiam deflectuntur."

<sup>c</sup> "Hell."— *Sheol.* The place of lost souls, more frequently designated as *Gehennah*.



## XXI.

## On the Death of a Presbyter.

(CANON LVII., tom. vi., p. 324.)

“MY brethren, present on my behalf  
A supplication to the King ;  
And pray for me with tears,  
Who have departed from you for ever !

Offer up for me, my brethren,  
A supplication to the King ;  
That my course may tend to happiness,  
And that I may attain to the place of light.”

“Be comforted, oh, our brother,  
For sin did not rule over thee ;  
The Blessed One will come forth to meet thee,  
And give thee the reward of thy labours.”

“But the judgment is decreed, it now hasteneth ;  
The end of my days is completed ;  
And before I had prepared for my journey,<sup>a</sup>  
The King sent and took me away !”

“HE is bountiful<sup>b</sup> in his mercy ;  
He can make thy pound ten thousand ;  
The bridegroom whose truth thou hast preserved,  
Will place a crown upon thy head.”



fourth strophe, produces a conviction that the hymn was intended for one who had died without much warning.

*d* "Lest I should light upon the fire."—See Hymn XV. and the note on the last strophe; also Hymn XIII.

*e* "He will provide thee with wings."—Literally, *will cause wings to grow on thy sides*.

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## XXII.

*For a Time of Pestilence.*

(CANON LXIX., tom. vi., p. 338.)

THE Church is desolate and sits mournfully,  
For no one enters or departs ;  
THY decree hath destroyed them !  
And the priests groan in the holy place,  
With loud sighs for their companions,  
Who have departed from them for ever !

Howl, old age, and weep !  
For already is snapped in sunder  
The staff on which thou leanedst ;—  
Who shall hold and raise thee up ?  
For Death hath broken it and caused it to decay,  
He hath entered and placed it in the tomb !

Who would not weep, my brethren,  
With bitter wailings ?  
Who does not suffer and groan and sigh,  
For the sword which is in our streets ?  
Young men, beloved and comely,  
Wither suddenly like flowers !

Oh God, the Father, who hath fashioned us  
For His great glory,  
Now deliver us and in Thy pity let us live !

Let not Thy fair image perish  
And become a derision to its enemies,  
But pardon us and save our lives !

No deaths are so grievous  
As the evil death of the wicked man ;  
His iniquity addeth to the burning,  
And the flame can not be quenched ;  
Hope and escape are cut off.—  
Save us from it, and in Thy grace let us live !

Confess us and put us not to shame  
Before the nations who know Thee not ;  
Since we have not declined from Thy law,  
Nor from the precepts of Thy doctrine,  
Preserve us from the judgment which hasteneth,  
And from the wrath which threatens us !<sup>a</sup>

HEPTASYLLABIC, in strophes of six verses. In this hymn, as in many others, the last verse of each strophe is redundant in syllables, in some instances having an Alexandrine length.

<sup>a</sup> Some fine hymns on seasons of pestilence, of greater length than this occur. (See Canons LXIII. and LXIV.)

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## XXIII.

## A Prayer in prospect of Judgment.

(PARENESIS XXXII., tom. vi., p. 484.)

BEFORE my offences  
 Are brought against me  
 At the tribunal of justice ;  
 And cause me to stand  
 In the presence of the Judge  
 With confusion of face :—  
     Have mercy on me, oh Lord, for Thou  
     art abundant in mercy !

Before Thou shalt close  
 Thy door against me  
 Thou Son of God ;  
 And I shall become  
 Food for the fire  
 Which dieth not in Hell :—  
     Have mercy on me, &c.

Before the wheel of time<sup>s</sup>  
 Shall run its course  
 Above the well ;  
 And the pitcher  
 Of all tribes of men  
 Be broken at the fountain :—  
     Have mercy on me, &c.

Before those who have made  
A vain profession<sup>b</sup>  
Shall cry, " Lord ! Lord !"<sup>c</sup>  
And Thou answerest them  
" I know you not  
Who ye are :"—  
Have mercy on me, &c.

Before the mighty hosts  
Shall go forth in the presence  
Of the Son of the King ;  
And shall gather together<sup>d</sup>  
Our unhappy race  
Before the judgment-seat :—  
Have mercy on me, &c.

Before the dust  
Shall return to the earth  
And we become but clay ;  
And the forms *of men*  
Now so beautiful  
Are turned to corruption :—  
Have mercy on us, &c.

Before the withering blast  
Of Death shall smite thee<sup>e</sup>  
As if thou wert a tree ;  
And thy body shall put forth  
Diseases which presage  
The season of death :—  
Have mercy on me, &c.

Before the brilliant sun  
 Shall become darkened  
 In the expanse<sup>a</sup> on high ;  
 Let Thy light appear,  
 And chase away the gloom  
 Which obscures my intellect :—  
 Have mercy on me, &c.

Before the voice of the trumpet  
 Shall shout aloud  
 To announce Thy coming ;<sup>g</sup>  
 O Lord Jesus,  
 Have pity on Thy servants  
 Who pray earnestly to Thee :—  
 Have mercy on me, &c.

THIS hymn furnishes an illustration of the chorus, which there is reason to believe, formed a part of many of the others although its place is not always indicated. The abbreviations are translated as they appear in the printed text. The metre is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of six verses besides the chorus, which is either tetrasyllabic repeated three times, or consists of a verse of twelve syllables.

<sup>a</sup> “ Before the wheel of time.”—Eccles. xii. 6. This is an exact copy of the *Peschito* with the addition of the words ܬܝܡܐ *time*, and ܕܠܝܬܐ *all tribes or families*, which form a beautiful exegesis of the passage; the members of the sentence also appear in reversed order. A proof is here furnished in addition to many others, *first*, of the existence and common use of the *Peschito* in the time of Ephraem; and, *secondly*, of the identity of its text at that time and the present.



<sup>b</sup> "A vain profession."—This translation is given to the word ܒܐܬܝܢܐܢܐ. The only reference to it in the Lexicons is found in Castell, who renders it *figurans, plastes, sculptor*, but, as is too often the case, without furnishing any authority. The sense of *pretender* or *imitator*, and by implication, that of *vain professor*, is fixed by this passage in Ephraem, and by one in the Syriac text of the *Letters of Athanasius*. In page ൧൧, line 15 (Cureton's text) of that work, Athanasius says, "*I have sent a copy of a letter that ye may know the fraud of these pretenders,*" ܒܐܬܝܢܐܢܐ. This word is borrowed from the Greek *σχημα*, adaptations of which are of frequent occurrence in Syriac.

<sup>c</sup> "Shall cry, Lord! Lord!"—This expression occurs twice in the New Testament, Matt. xxv. 13, and Luke xiii. 25. There is nothing in the text to shew which Ephraem quotes.

<sup>d</sup> "Shall gather together."—See Matt. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27; in the *Peschito*.

<sup>e</sup> "Death shall smite thee."—There is here an instance of the change from the first to the second person, to which reference was made in note *b*, Hymn XX.

<sup>f</sup> "The expanse on high."—The word translated *expanse* is ܒܥܠܡܐ the usual meaning of which is *altitudo, sublimitas*. But as this would differ but little from the ܒܥܠܡܐ on *high*, which follows, the rendering *expanse* is given, which is justified by Isa. viii. 8, "*The spreading out or expanse ܒܥܠܡܐ of his wings.*"

<sup>g</sup> "To announce thy coming."—Literally *before thy coming*; i.e., evidently, to make it known.

## XXIV.

## A Morning Hymn.

(PARÆNESIS LXIV., tom. vi., p. 534.)

ON my loved friends,  
Ye children of the Church,<sup>a</sup>  
Offer up your praise  
At the season of the dawn :  
Every morning let us give thanks,  
And bow down in adoration,  
To the good *Being* who hath arranged in order,  
All the starry lights on high.

He hath rolled away the covering  
From the regions of the earth ;<sup>b</sup>  
And caused his light to beam forth  
On *all* created things.  
The bright ray of the morning  
Waketh up the sleeper.—  
Let Thy day-spring<sup>c</sup>  
Shine upon our hearts.

Let Thy glory, O Lord,  
Be the subject of our song ;<sup>d</sup>  
A living treasure  
In the midst of our souls ;  
And as Thou hast caused us to come forth

From *the shades of* darkness,  
So deliver us  
From the place of torment.<sup>c</sup>

Nourish in Thy compassion,  
From Thine own gifts,  
The children of the Church,  
Who are dependent on Thee.  
Let Thy tender pity become  
An intercessor on our behalf;  
Thou Lord of the mornings,  
And of appointed seasons.

Lord, let Thy favour  
Be a companion to us ;  
And by it may we arrive  
At Thy great day.  
Let the right hand of Thy loving-kindness  
Deal bountifully with us ;  
And by it may we pass over  
The sea of fire.

Thou Just One, who doth<sup>s</sup> recompense  
Every one according to equity,  
Exact not from me  
A rigid reckoning ;  
Let Thy mercies which accompany me,  
Be my deliverer,  
And by Thee may I attain  
To the haven<sup>s</sup> of life.

When the appointed scrutiny  
Shall be by fire,  
Sprinkle me with Thy dew,<sup>h</sup>  
Like the young men *in the furnace* ;  
When the flames furiously rage  
Against those who have done wickedly,  
Let me be united  
With Thy holy ones, O Lord !

O Thou precious balsam  
That can heal all wounds !  
Give health to our sores<sup>i</sup>  
By the medicine of Thy tender mercies ;  
And in the society  
Of Abraham and Isaac  
And of Jacob, who were upright,  
Unite Thou me, O Lord !

Let Thy body and Thy blood<sup>k</sup>  
Be to me a companion,  
And by it let me be delivered  
From the raging flame ;  
Let Thy cross become  
The means of passage to all of us,<sup>l</sup>  
That we may pass over the abyss  
Which is full of terror.

Behold this our convent<sup>m</sup>  
Calleth upon Thee ;  
Let us hear Thy voice,

“Come ye blessed of my Father;”  
 Thou lofty One, who art plenteous  
 In pity and loving-kindness,  
 Let Thy mercy raise us up on high  
 In the day of Thy appearing.

The high heavens and the earth  
 And all that is therein  
 Shall return thanks with us  
 Because of our conversion.\*  
 Let praise be to Thee  
 O Father, who art to be adored,  
 And to Thy only Son  
 And to the Holy Ghost!

THIS hymn is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of eight verses.

<sup>a</sup> “Ye children of the Church.”—The word here translated *children* is not **בְּנֵי** which would give to the phrase the meaning of *fellow-members* or *communicants*, but **בְּנוֹת** *begotten ones*, in allusion to the regeneration which is the portion of Christians.

<sup>b</sup> “From the regions of the earth.”—**מֵעֵדֶיךָ** *the ends, sides, termini, &c.* It is of very frequent occurrence, the numeral *four* being understood. This is supplied in Hymn XXVIII., strophe 1, and XXV., strophe 15.

<sup>c</sup> “Thy day-spring.”—**מִצְיֹן**. In Hebrew and Chaldee **צֶמַח** is *to germinate, to bud or spring forth*, in reference to vegetation. The application to the rays of the sun, which dart or spring forth from it, is obvious enough.

<sup>d</sup> “The subject of our song.”—Sy., **מִלֵּל** *a homily, theme*; but the word is used for metrical compositions. (See Introduction.)

<sup>e</sup> "The place of torment."—Sy., *Gehennah*.

<sup>f</sup> "Who doth recompense."—For the enallage of persons see the note *b* on Hymn XX. As this *usus loquendi* is harsh when employed in English, it will not always be retained in the translation.

<sup>g</sup> "The haven of life."—**ܠܚܝܬ** *haven* is the Greek λιμήν, *portus*. It frequently occurs, but without the olaph **ܠܚܝܬ**; this form, with olaph, is not given in the Lexicons.

<sup>h</sup> "Sprinkle me with Thy dew."—This expression, which in itself is extraordinary, receives light from the song of the three children, from which it is borrowed. In verse 50 of that addition to Daniel, the Syriac version has, "*the angel made the furnace like a wind of dew*;" i. e., a moist dewy air, beautifully contrasting with the dry scorching nature of the flames of the furnace. The Latin version in Walton's Polyglott is, "*quasi ventum roscidum*;" that of Junius is, "*tanquam si aër fuisset perspersus rore*." The whole strophe is illustrated by this passage in the history of the three Jewish confessors. The flames consumed their enemies who were near the furnace. So Ephraem prays, that when the wicked are destroyed he may be united with the holy, who, like the three children, are saved from the flames of hell.

<sup>i</sup> "Give health to our sores."—A plain allusion to the case of Lazarus, who, although before *full of sores*, was taken to Abraham's bosom.

<sup>k</sup> "Let Thy body and Thy blood."—See the fuller development of this idea in Hymn XV., strophe 1.

<sup>l</sup> "The means of passage."—See Hymn XXV., strophe 14.

<sup>m</sup> "Our convent."—This sense of **ܨܚܝܬܐ** is not in the Lexicons, but may be deduced from the ordinary meanings of the word, *fœdus*, *pactum*, *a covenant*, *an agreement*; or from the Arabic **قَام** in fourth Conjugation, *commoratus fuit in loco*. The idea exists in a passage quoted by Michaelis, in Castell, (*s. v.*, **صَوَّ**) **ܨܚܝܬܐ** which he renders *virgines sacrae*, but probably is *fellow nuns*, *the daughters of the convent*. It occurs in this sense in the

*Acta S. Ephraemi*, in *Assemani Bib. Or.*, tom. i., p. 47. Benedict translates, "*iste fidelium cœtus*."

"Conversion."—Although this rendering of ܡܕܢܐ is sanctioned by New Testament usage, as when the *conversion* of the Gentiles is spoken of in Acts xv. 3; and although Benedict conveys the idea of a moral reformation, *de nostro ad bonam frugem reditu*; the translator confesses that he is not satisfied with the word, nor convinced that the idea of religious conversion is that intended to be conveyed by Ephraem. It seems natural enough in our day, for Christians to thank God for their conversion; but it must be acknowledged that the *usus loquendi* is not common in the works of Ephraem. Cases may be *imagined* indeed, which would justify another rendering, more adapted to the style and circumstances of this father. ܡܕܢܐ like the Latin *reditus* may mean *an income, annual profit, &c.*; or the brethren of the monastery may have had some singular *turning* event in their history to which allusion is here made; but perhaps they may have been, like Ephraem himself, heathens in early life. Certainly there is nothing which will harmonize so well with the context, where heaven and earth are called to join them in giving thanks, as the religious *conversion* of those by whom this Morning Hymn was offered up.

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## XXV.

## Hymn for the Evening.

(PARÆNESIS LXV., tom. vi., p. 535.)

IN the time of evening<sup>a</sup>  
Let praise be given to Thee,  
From the united tongues<sup>b</sup>  
Of the children of men.

Thou hast given the daytime  
For business and labour,  
And that we may provide  
All useful things.

Behold all who are oppressed  
With heavy toil,  
Return Thee their thanks  
Because Thou dost give them repose.

Who is the being  
That will not worship Thee,  
Because Thou carest so much  
For our humanity?

Thou hast set up the lights of heaven,  
With appointed seasons in the evening,  
That Thou mayest reprove him  
Who is never satisfied,



With the *bodily* strength  
Of his fellow creatures,  
Who labour for him freely  
Through all the day.

To the hungry and thirsty—  
To those who labour and are fatigued—  
The evening comes,  
And sets them at liberty.

The season of evening  
Hath now arrived,  
And maketh joyful  
The world and its labourers.

But he who is not pitiful  
Towards his fellows,  
And he who is avaricious  
Not being satisfied with his work,—

The evening despises him  
And treats him with contempt,<sup>c</sup>  
And his oppressive covetousness  
Is not satisfied.

Blessed be Thy Majesty  
Who from the beginning,  
Hast carefully regarded  
Our human nature.

Who hast appointed a returning  
To the children of men,  
And all living creatures  
In the time of evening.

He hath put a seal upon His Church  
And defendeth her children,  
From the adversary Satan  
And from all his hosts.

Let Thy cross become  
A secure passage,<sup>d</sup>  
To Thy flock which is redeemed  
With Thy living blood.

Let Thy peace, Lord, be diffused  
Through the four regions of the earth;<sup>e</sup>  
And let the wicked one flee away  
From the midst of us.

From every tongue  
Of all animated creatures,  
And from all places,  
Let praise ascend.

And we together with them,  
Will ascribe glory  
To Thee, O Lord, and to the Father,  
And to the Holy Ghost.

THIS hymn is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of four verses.

*a* "In the time of evening."—Sy., *in all evenings*.

*b* "From the united tongues."—Sy., *from all the mouths*.

*c* "Treats him with contempt."—**𐎧𐎲𐎠𐎥𐎵 𐎧𐎥𐎶𐎵** *spits in his face*, a strong orientalism, indicating the uncereemonious manner in which the covetous man, who wishes the evening would not arrive, is treated by its steady and inevitable approach. The Latin printed text avoids the *prosopopœia*, and translates "*rapacissimis illis—vix dici potest quam ingratus accidat et molestus*."

*d* "A secure passage."—See Hymn XXIV., note *b*.

*e* "The four regions of the earth."—See Hymn XXIV., note *l*.

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## XXVI.

## Hymn for Easter.

(CANON XLVIII., tom. vi., p. 303.)

BLESSED be the Messiah  
Who hath given us a hope,  
That the dead shall live *again* ;  
And hath assured our race,  
That when it has suffered dissolution,  
It shall be renewed.

Listen, O mortal men,  
To the mystery of the resurrection ;  
Which was once concealed ;  
Behold, it is now proclaimed abroad,  
In this latter age,  
In the holy Church.

For Jesus then became  
A sojourner with death  
For the space of three days,  
And set at liberty his captives ;<sup>a</sup>  
And laid waste his encampment,  
And returned *the spoils* to our race.

For before that time  
Death by this was made arrogant,  
And boasted himself of it—

“ Behold, priests and kings  
Lie bound by me,  
In the midst of my prisons !”

A mighty war  
Came without warning  
Against the tyrant Death ;  
And, as a robber,  
The shouts *of the foe* overtook him,  
And humbled his glory.

The dead perceived  
A sweet savour of life,<sup>b</sup>  
In the midst of Hades ;  
And they began to spread the glad tidings  
Among one another,  
That their hope was accomplished.

From the beginning *of the world*,  
Death had dominion  
Over mortal men ;  
Until there arose  
The Mighty One  
And abolished his pride.

His voice then came  
Like heavy thunder  
On mortal men ;  
And he proclaimed the glad tidings,  
That they were set at liberty  
From their bondage.

THE metre is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of six verses. It has no title in the printed text, being one of the general Canons; it is called a "Hymn for Easter," from internal evidence.

<sup>a</sup> "Liberated his captives."—Sy., *snatched away his captivity*. The allusion is to Eph. iv. 8. "*He received gifts for men,*" in that text, is also the foundation of the last verse, "*he returned the spoils to our race.*"

<sup>b</sup> "A sweet savour of life."—(See Hymn XIII., strophe 1.) The expression is taken from 2 Cor. ii. 16, "*a savour of life.*" Michaelis, in Castell (*s.v.*, ذبيح) says that *odor vitæ* is put *pro medicamine efficacissimo* in the Epistle to the Corinthians. The Syriac writer of the *Life of Ephraem*, which is printed by Asseman, (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 54,) uses the phrase in a way which probably that father would not have recognized; for he says that when the bones of Ephraem were removed from one sepulchre to another, "*a sweet savour of life exhaled from them, and imparted life and gladness to all believers.*"

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## XXVII.

## Before retiring to Rest.

(PARENESIS XXX., tom. vi., p. 490.)

GRANT, Lord, that if I keep my vigils,  
I may stand in purity before Thee ;  
And if, oh my Saviour, I slumber,  
Let my sleep be free from sin.  
If in my watching I commit iniquity,  
Oh Lord by Thy grace forgive me ;  
If I sin when sleeping,  
Let Thy kindness be my expiation.

And through the cross of Thy humiliation,  
Afford me refreshing slumber ;  
And deliver me from disturbing dreams,  
And from profane imaginations ;  
And in sleep full of peace,  
Let all the night conduct me ;  
Let not evil beings have dominion over me,  
Nor thoughts full of iniquity.

And from hateful concupiscence deliver me  
Through Thy living body which I have eaten ;  
And I will lie down and sleep in peace.  
And let Thy blood be a protector to me :—

And to the soul which is Thy production  
 Grant the freedom of Thy likeness;<sup>a</sup>  
 And let Thy right hand watch over  
 The body which Thy hands have formed.

Let the wall of Thy mercy encompass me  
 Like a buckler of defence;  
 And when my body is still, and slumbers,  
 Let Thy kindness be its guard.  
 Let not the Evil One approach my couch,  
 Thro' the supplication of the mother who bare Thee;  
 And by Thy sacrifice<sup>b</sup> on behalf of all men,  
 Put Satan to flight that he persecute me not.

And, Lord, perform Thy promise to me,  
 And protect my life by Thy cross;  
 And when I awake I will praise Thee,  
 Because Thou hast displayed Thy love to my lowliness.  
 From the sleepers, satisfied with rest,  
 And the watchers who have put on their arms,  
 Be glory to Thee, Thou guardian Spirit!<sup>c</sup>  
 Who hast made me a watcher for Thy praise!

THIS hymn is heptasyllabic, in strophes of eight verses.

<sup>a</sup> "The freedom of Thy likeness."—ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ probably refers to Rom. viii. 21, "*the glorious liberty of the sons of God*," in conjunction with Gen. i. 26.

<sup>b</sup> "And by Thy sacrifice."—That no reliance can be placed on the Latin translation of these hymns will appear from the render-



ing of this simple and scriptural expression, "*Et ob incruentum ac salutiferum illud sacrificium, quod pro omnibus Æterno Patri in arâ Crucis sanctissimâ obtulisti!*"

“Thou guardian Spirit!”—The Syriac ܕܡܪܝܢ from ܡܪܝܢ *expergefecit*, is much used by ecclesiastical writers for the guardian spirits, supposed to watch over good men. The phrase here is, *Thou living watcher*, to distinguish Christ from the speaker, who applies the term ܕܡܪܝܢ to himself in the last verse.

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## XXVIII.

## Hymn for the Lord's Day.

(PARÆNESIS XLI., tom. vi., p. 499.)

GLORY be to the Good  
Who hath honoured and exalted  
The first day of the week,  
In the four regions of the world ;  
In the beginning<sup>a</sup> this day,  
Was before the others,  
In which were set in order,  
The heavens and the earth.

On this our Lord arose,  
From the midst of the sepulchre,  
With power and might,  
And the strength of a giant ;  
And on it the holy Church,  
Adorns herself  
With illustrious priests  
Who minister to her.

On this day will appear,  
The Lord, at the end of all things,  
Riding on a chariot,  
Of burning flame ;

The King of Majesty,  
Will quickly come down,  
From His divine habitation.  
The King Messiah,  
Will direct his way,  
To the hill of Jabes,  
Which is Jerusalem.

He will set up His cross  
On the tomb of Adam,  
Where the Jews of old  
Also set it up.  
He will shout with His voice,  
And the rocks will be rent,  
And the dead will rise up,  
From their burial places.

Again the earth shall be  
Without form and void,<sup>b</sup>  
As was once its state,  
At the beginning *of all things.*<sup>c</sup>  
And the King shall command  
His mighty hosts,  
Concerning penalties,  
And concerning rewards.<sup>d</sup>  
And they shall collect together  
The dust of Adam,<sup>e</sup>  
In the twinkling of an eye.—  
From all regions,  
They shall come to judgment,

And to a strict scrutiny ;  
And to render a reckoning,  
And to a public trial.

And He will call the righteous  
Into the Kingdom,  
But send the wicked  
Into the midst of Gehennah !

The wicked in their actions,  
Will then resemble,  
An eye which is blind,  
In which there is no light.

They approach, they knock,  
They intreat, they weep,—  
“ Lord ! Lord ! open  
Thy door to us ! ”  
And He shall say to them,  
“ Depart, ye cursed,  
For I know not  
Who ye are ! ”

In that hour,  
When all tribes of men,  
Shall stand in need  
Of the forgiveness of sins ;  
We earnestly supplicate  
This of Thee, oh Lord,

That Thy mercy may abound  
Towards our offences.

This world quickly  
Shall pass away,  
And its beauty be destroyed  
With all that is in it.  
Awake my beloved !  
And pray and intreat,  
While there remains  
A place for repentance :—

Before the Angel of Death  
Shall overtake us  
And we are removed  
From the present world :—

Let us be steadfast  
Every morning.—  
To thee be glory  
O Thou great in mercy !  
To the Father and to the Son  
And to the Holy Ghost,  
Let us offer up praise  
At all seasons !

THAT this hymn was intended to be used on the Lord's day is plain from the first strophe. The metre is tetrasyllabic. It will be seen that the strophes are most unequally divided, without any

principle being apparent as the foundation of the arrangement. The division of the printed copy has been followed in preference to any conjectural emendation. Even if the whole hymn were divided into strophes of eight lines, like the two first, the difficulty would be increased, since the sense would then be more violated than an artificial harmony of the parts now is.

<sup>a</sup> "In the beginning."—The Syriac text of Genesis is here alluded to, for **ܒܪܥܝܢܐ** the word employed there and here, is not the usual expression for beginning. Thus in strophe 5, **ܒܠܐ** the more common term, is used.

<sup>b</sup> "Without form and void."—An exact copy of the words of Gen. i. 2, both in the Hebrew and the *Peschito*. Unless we imagine that Ephraem could read Hebrew, the Syriac version then in use was the same in this passage as our present copies.

<sup>c</sup> "At the beginning of *all things*."—From the very different genius of the two languages, it is impossible, without an offensive boldness, to translate from the Syriac into English, unless supplemental words are occasionally introduced, as in this instance. In the original there is an uniform number of syllables in each verse, and while it is not practicable to imitate this in a translation, it is thought more advisable to come somewhat near it by filling up of ellipses, than by retaining the extreme terseness of the Syriac.

<sup>d</sup> "And concerning rewards."—The word rendered *rewards* is **ܡܫܬܝܡܢܐ**, the common meanings of which are, *actio, factum, facinus, opus, res gesta*, not one of which conveys the idea of *reward*, nor do the Lexicons hint at such a meaning. The text, however, seems to require such a contrast to **ܠܥܬܐܢܐ** *vindicta, penalties*. So the Latin translator thought, who has, "*ut parem improbis penam, justis autem premium et coronam reddant immarescibilem*." Until the sense of *reward* is confirmed by other instances, the Arabic **سعر** fourth conjugation, *pretium constituit, he fixed a price*, may be quoted.

<sup>e</sup> "The dust of Adam."—Meaning the whole human race; Adam

in Hebrew being not only a proper name, but also an appellative, designating the genus.

*f* "A public trial."—*ḥoos* an investigation. But something different from mere scrutiny, spoken of before, must be intended. Castell speaks of a "*perscrutatio publica, quæ post privatam illam, de qua 1 Cor. xi. 28, in usu erat apud Syros.*"

*g* "Lord! Lord! open."—See note *c*, Hymn XXIII.

*h* "A place for repentance."—An allusion to Heb. xii. 17.

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## XXIX.

## A Hymn of the whole Church.

(PARÆNESIS LXX., tom. vi., p. 540.)

OH Jesus, our Lord,  
King worthy of adoration,  
Who overcame by His passion  
The tyrant Death !  
Oh Thou Son of God,  
Who hast promised to us  
A renewed life,  
And an exalted kingdom ;<sup>a</sup>—  
Turn away from us  
All hurtful things,  
And cause to dwell in our habitation<sup>b</sup>  
Peace and kindness ;  
That in the day of Thy advent  
We may go forth to meet Thee ;  
And may appear in Thy sight  
According to Thy will.

By loud Hosannahs  
We will give thanks to Thy name,  
In return for Thy favour  
Towards our race ;  
For Thy tender mercies have been abundant  
On behalf of our mortal state ;



And Thy love has been powerful  
Towards our souls.

And blot out our sins  
By Thy propitiation,  
That we may praise Thy name,  
Because of Thy great goodness.<sup>c</sup>  
Oh Lord, through Thy grace  
Make us all worthy,  
To give thanks and to worship  
Thy Divinity.  
Let our eyes which have seen  
Thy glory in this world,  
Contemplate Thy favour  
In that which is to come.

Our ears which have listened  
To the voice of Thy instructions,  
Let them not hear, oh Lord,  
The sounds of torment !  
Our mouths which have sung hallelujahs  
In the midst of the churches,  
Make them worthy  
To hymn forth Thy praise.  
And our tongues also  
Which have shouted out, " Holy !"  
Do Thou direct rightly,  
For Thy glory.  
Our hands which have carried<sup>d</sup>  
Thy body and blood,

Let them receive from Thee  
The forgiveness of our trespasses.  
Our feet which have trodden  
Thy holy temple,  
Cause them to walk  
In the region of felicity.  
And our congregation  
Which adores Thy Divinity,  
Multiply towards it  
All saving blessings ;  
And make to abide among us  
Thy great tenderness,  
And through it may we abound  
In returning praise to Thee.  
And open Thy door  
To our united supplication,  
And let our service also  
Come into Thy presence.

And let good be turned to us,  
According to Thy tender mercies ;  
But cause to pass away from us  
All things which are hurtful.  
And without intermission  
We will offer praise  
To Thee, oh Lord, and to Thy Father,  
And to the Holy Ghost !

THE title of this hymn has been given to it on the authority of internal evidence. Like the former one, the arrangement is very

arbitrary, and there can be little doubt that the divisions of the printed copy are those of a transcriber who neglected to observe the metrical style of the composition. There are altogether seventy-six verses: and if we might presume to give eight to a strophe, harmony would be restored. There would then be nine strophes, with a doxology of four verses at the close. The metre is tetrasyllabic.

<sup>a</sup> "And an exalted kingdom."—The reference appears to be to Matt. xix. 28, combined with Luke xxii. 29. In the text ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ *a new life*, may be the translation of the Greek *παλιγγενεσία*, although the *Peschito* renders it ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܚܝܐ *the new world*, by way of exegesis.

<sup>b</sup> "In our habitation."—The Sy., ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ *in our place*, admits several interpretations. The more limited sense has been preferred as being in accordance with the genius of the hymn. The Latin translator conveys a more extensive idea:—" *Clementiae lucem in hisce terrarum sedibus diffunde.*"

<sup>c</sup> "Because of Thy great goodness."—ܡܠܟܘܬܐ *Thy goodnesses*, an emphatic plural.

<sup>d</sup> "Our hands which have carried."—As an interesting question relating to the mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper may be raised on this and similar passages, it will be better to give the Syriac word. It is the third person plural, feminine, *paēl*, of ܥܡܠܐ *paēl ܥܡܠܐ gestavit, circumtulit*; Castell also gives the meanings *extulit, celebravit*. The Latin translator, with every wish to favour his own subjective views, has *tractarunt*. He is guilty here, however, of singular unfaithfulness to the text. The Syriac is, undoubtedly, "*our hands which have handled* (or lifted up, or celebrated) *Thy body and blood*;" while he translates, "*Manus, quæ sacrosanctum Tuum Corpus persæpe tractarunt, ob impuritate, qua sordescunt, Tuo Sanguine absterge*," a sense utterly wanting in the original, where the body and blood are both governed by the same verb. How erroneous must be those views of Ephraem which are deduced from the Latin translation!

## XXX.

## For the whole Church.

(PARENESIS LV., tom. vi., p. 520.)

LORD ! let Thy right hand raise us,  
And extend aid to Thy flock ;  
That our race may be exalted by Thy favour,  
For Thine is the victory !  
Thou giver of grace to the upright,  
Afford us happiness by Thy power ;  
Let the day of Thy appearing gladden us,  
And may we carry oil in our lamps !


Place a crown on the head of Thy beloved ones,  
And let them rejoice in Thee when Thou comest ;  
May they enter Thy tabernacle with Thee,  
And offer praise to Thy greatness.  
The cherubim kneel before Thy majesty,  
Thou gracious One,<sup>a</sup> full of mercy !  
Pontiffs<sup>b</sup> and priests praise Thee, oh Son,  
Who is altogether like His Father !<sup>c</sup>


Count us all worthy of Paradise,  
In the day appointed for judgment ;  
May we enter Eden in full company,  
And be delighted at Thy table.  
Let us be guests at Thy banquet,

And be adorned in the pavilion of light ;  
 And in Thy tents full of brightness,  
 Number us with Thy worshippers.

Vouchsafe prosperity to Thy Churches,  
 And sow Thy peace among us ;  
 Let tribes and families give thanks  
 To the name of the Trinity.  
 Oh Lord ! confirm our souls  
 In Thy faith and love ;  
 Forgive our trespasses and sins  
 Through Thy mercy, oh lover of the penitent !

THIS hymn is heptasyllabic, in strophes of eight verses.

<sup>a</sup> "Thou gracious One."— literally, *O grace!* a prosopœia not capable of correct expression in English.

<sup>b</sup> "Pontiffs."—The word  thus translated, generally means a priest of some heathen religious culture, but is several times employed in the Epistle to the Hebrews for the high priest. In the ecclesiastical nomenclature of Ephraem it may mean *bishop*, but this wants confirmation.

<sup>c</sup> "Who is like His Father."—For the enallage of person here, see note *b* on Hymn XX.

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## XXXI.

## A Prayer to the Trinity.

(PARÆNESIS LVIII., tom. vi., p. 525.)

O LORD, my God, defend me  
Like the pupil of the eye ;<sup>a</sup>  
Be Thou my protector,<sup>b</sup> and under Thy wings  
I shall be shielded from temptations.

Be a guard to mine eye,  
That it look not stealthily ;<sup>c</sup>  
Be a guard to the ear,  
That it hear not wickedly.

Be a guard to the mouth,  
And watch also the lips ;  
That my heart decline not to vile sayings,<sup>d</sup>  
Nor perform unrighteous deeds.

Lord, furnish us with knowledge,  
And freely afford us understanding ;  
Grant, Lord, that we may be pleasing to Thee,  
More than sweet ointments and perfumes.

Grant, Lord, that we may love Thee,  
And hate all the world ;<sup>e</sup>  
Grant, Lord, that we may gain Thyself,  
Instead of fleeting possessions.

Grant, Lord, that we may offer to Thee  
Three choice offerings ;  
Grant, Lord, that we may burn to Thee  
Three precious kinds of incense.

Grant, Lord, that we may kindle for Thee  
Three lamps of light ;  
The mind, the soul, with the body,  
Three *gifts* to the Trinity.

We will give our mind to the Father,  
And our soul we will give to the Son,  
And our body to the Holy Ghost,  
For He renewed it from the dust.

Oh Father, sanctify our mind to Thee ;  
Oh Son, sanctify our soul to Thee ;  
Oh Holy Spirit, sanctify  
Our body, which is frail with infirmities.

Grant, Lord, that we may rejoice in Thee,  
And do Thou be glad in us at the last day ;  
And from mind and body and soul,  
Be glory to Thee—and Thy mercy be on us !

THIS hymn is pentasyllabic, in strophes of four verses. In the printed text the two last strophes are joined in one, but as there seems to be nothing to justify this, they are separated in the translation.

“ Like the pupil of the eye.”—A quotation, with minor alter-

ations for the sake of the metre, from Psalm xvii. 8. For *the pupil of the eye*, the Hebrew has  $\text{עַיִן הַבַּיִת}$  rendered by Gesenius, *pupilla, filia oculi*; while the Syriac has only  $\text{ܥܝܢܐ ܒܝܬܐ}$  which, were it not for the reduplication of the  $\text{ܥ}$  would be *filia oculi*, like the Hebrew; nor can it be doubted that the same figure is inherent in the expression, however difficult it may be to account for the difference of orthography. But Michaelis says (in Castell, s. v.), *proprie est porta* (Arab.  $\text{بَاب}$ ) *oculorum*; a derivation requiring as great an orthographical variation as the more common one.

δ “My Protector.”—The text reads  $\text{ܥܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ}$  *custodia tua*, which is conjecturally altered to  $\text{ܥܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ}$  *custodia mea*, without which emendation it is difficult to make sense of the passage.

ε “That it look not stealthily.”— $\text{ܕܠܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܬܐ}$ . As the radical meaning of  $\text{ܕܥܝܢܐ}$  is *latus, the side*, the word might admit the idea of the eye being directed out of the straight course, *i. e., to forbidden things*. But a *stealthy, conscious look*, characterizes one who allows himself to contemplate things which he knows are evil and prohibited.

ζ “Vile sayings.”— $\text{ܕܠܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ}$  literally *vilenesses*. But the mention of the lips as the cause, in the previous verse demands some such version as is here given.

η “Hate all the world.”—As our phrase, *all the world*, like the French, *tout le monde*, means *every body*, it is necessary to say that Ephraem uses it here as it is employed in the New Testament for *the pleasures, fashions, and principles* of this present life, among worldly men.

θ “The mind, the soul.”— $\text{ܕܠܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ}$  *mens, anima*.



## XXXII.

## For Defence against Satan.

(PARÆNESIS LIX., tom. vi., p. 526.)

JUDGE my cause, oh Lord, and avenge me,<sup>a</sup>  
On Satan who oppresses me ;  
Let Thy power fight on my behalf,  
Against his dogs who rouse themselves against me.

I have renounced him and his wiles,  
And the deceitful ways of the corrupter ;  
For this reason, behold he labours  
To catch me with his devices.

And if Thy might does not help me,  
And Thy cross does not save me,  
He will beguile me with one of his snares,  
For his stratagems are very numerous.

Lord ! let him not overcome me in the contest,  
Who was conquered when he warred with Thee ;  
For great will be the shame to him,  
Whom that conquered one conquers !

I have heard often that by the yoke  
Of lowliness he is subdued ;—  
Oh Thou that raisest the humble from the dust,  
And bringest down the haughty to ruin,

Put far from me an evil heart, O Lord,  
And along with it all arrogancy ;  
And cause humility to abide with me,  
And meekness and gentleness.

Grant, Lord, that I may be Thine own,  
And please Thee according to Thy will ;  
And enlighten the eyes<sup>b</sup> of my understanding,  
That I sleep not the sleep of death !

Cursed be thou, oh Satan,  
In the name of Jesus, the God ;  
And let thy profane mouth be closed  
At the command of Christ, my Lord !

Cursed be thou in earth and heaven  
By those above and those beneath !  
To Thee, O Jesus, I fly,  
And make Thy cross my refuge.

For Thou art my deliverer from his yoke,  
That I might become a labourer in Thy vineyard ;  
And I will thank, worship, and praise Thee,  
And the Father, and the Holy Ghost !

HEPTASYLLABIC, in strophes of four verses.

<sup>a</sup> " Judge my cause, oh Lord, and avenge me."—An exact quotation from Psalm xliii. 1.

<sup>b</sup> " And enlighten the eyes."—A quotation, with some verbal differences, from Psalm xiii. 3.

## XXXIII.

## For the whole Convent.

(PARÆNESIS LXVI., tom. vi., p. 586.)

RECEIVE, oh Lord,  
Our united supplications,  
Our ministration also,  
And our prayers.  
Give us a heart  
Full of affection,  
And also a mind  
Patient of suffering.

A mouth which confesseth  
In faith, *impart to us*,  
And let our voices be  
A harp of praise ;  
And as our bodies endure  
Watching and labour,  
Let Thy grace be extended  
Towards our sins.

Our mouths which have been  
Instruments of praise to Thee,  
Our tongues also  
Which have sung psalms to Thy glory,—  
Lord ! let them not cry out  
From the place of torment,

Which Thou hast made capable  
Of singing Thy praise !

Our eyes which have borne  
The heaviness of slumber,  
And our feet which have laboured  
And been fatigued for Thee,—  
Let them not be deprived  
Of their expectation,  
Nor their reward be lost  
In the day of retribution !

Let not the sounds of our mouths  
And of our stringed instruments,  
Be turned, oh Lord,  
To lamentation and weeping ;  
But in Thy loving-kindness,  
And with Thy favour,  
And Thy goodness,  
Accept our vigils !

And make us all worthy,  
That with one heart  
Sincere and pure,  
We may stand before Thee ;  
And in a worthy manner  
May offer up praise  
To Thee, oh Lord, and to the Father,  
And to the Spirit. Amen !

THIS hymn, both in its form and contents, is very similar to the Twenty-ninth, entitled, "A Hymn of the whole Church." As the sentiments of this are somewhat more specific and limited, the title given may probably express its original application. The metre is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of eight verses. The first strophe is a good illustration of the *rhyme* which Ephraem often aims at, although it is never carried throughout one of his compositions. The first four verses of the strophe end in AN; the last four in O.

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## XXXIV.

## A general Invocation.

(PARÆNESIS LIX., tom. vi., p. 519.)

O SON, begotten divinely  
Of the Father spiritually !  
The virgin Mary purely  
Brought Him forth bodily ;  
And He dwelt in her bosom secretly  
And appeared from her publicly ;  
Behold ! is honoured gloriously,  
Her memory constantly.

Ye martyrs who have suffered bravely,  
Your afflictions pleasantly,  
And received your crowns completely,  
As was your due righteously ;  
Intreat with us collectively,  
The Anointed One worshipfully,  
To exercise His mercy bountifully  
Upon all of us continually.

Call with Thy voice commandingly,  
That we may rise again quickly ;  
Who have eaten Thy body willingly,  
And drank Thy blood purely.  
And when Thou comest suddenly,

With the glory of the angels fearfully,  
 May we enter with Thee collectively  
 To the pavilion of light joyfully.

Glory to the Father eternally,  
 Who chose Mary purely ;  
 And adoration to the Son perpetually,  
 Who strengthened the martyrs bravely ;  
 Praise to the Spirit perfectly,  
 Who raiseth us from the dead surely ;  
 And on us be mercies abundantly,  
 At all seasons unvaryingly !

THE singular structure of this hymn, which has been closely followed in the translation, catches the eye of a mere casual reader of the Syriac text. The metre is heptasyllabic, in strophes of eight verses. Every verse ends with an adverb, with the termination *ih*. Some may think that "A Hymn to the Virgin," would be a more proper title than that which has been given to it ; but although she is certainly mentioned twice in it, the piece is not appropriated to her.

The Latin translator renders the passage referring to the Virgin in strophe 1 as follows :—" *Quem post temporis plenitudinem intermerata Maris Virginis viscera, Divino afflante Spiritu, excepere ;*" and that in strophe 4 :—" *Gloria Eterno Patri sit maxima, qui Beatam Virginem ad tantum honoris culmen evehit, ut in sui pectoris angustiis templum Divinæ Majestatis construeret, et in fragili humanæ carnis naturâ totam Divinitatis gloriam contineret.*" to which there is little to object, except the diffuseness by which thirty-two words are spun out of nine !

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## XXXV.

## The Praises of Noah.

(SERMO XLIX., tom. vi., p. 89.)

Oh how illustrious was Noah,  
Who excelled in comparison  
All the men of his age :  
For they were wanting in the scale  
When weighed by impartial justice ;<sup>a</sup>  
And one soul alone descended in the balance,  
By the armour of innocence.<sup>b</sup>  
They were drowned in the flood  
Who were deficient in weight,<sup>c</sup>  
And he was lifted up in the ark,  
The innocent and honourable one !—  
Glory to Him who took pleasure in him !

Noah extended his ministration  
Between two boundaries,  
And described two types ;  
He sealed up the time past,  
And entered upon the present :  
And between two generations  
He administered two mysteries.  
He dismissed<sup>d</sup> the men who were before him,  
And invited those who should come after ;  
He buried the old race,



And educated the rising one :—

Praises be to Him who chose him !

Then wandered<sup>e</sup> through the flood  
The ship of him who was lord of all ;<sup>f</sup>  
It proceeded from the east,  
And touched upon the west,—  
It flew to the south,  
And reached<sup>g</sup> unto the north ;  
Its flying upon the waters  
Prophecied to the dry land,  
And proclaimed that its progeny  
Would be fruitful on every side,  
And become great in every clime :—  
Praises be to its Redeemer !

In its course it described<sup>h</sup>  
The standard of its preserver,  
The cross of its shipmaster,  
The helm of its helmsman ;  
Who should come and appoint  
A Church in the waters,  
And by the threefold Name<sup>i</sup>  
Should redeem her inhabitants.  
And the Spirit in the form of the dove<sup>k</sup>  
Administered her<sup>l</sup> anointing,  
And the mystery<sup>m</sup> of her redemption :—  
Praises be to her Redeemer !

His mysteries in the old covenant,<sup>n</sup>

And His types in the ark,  
Bear witness one to the other ;  
For as were emptied out  
The chambers of the ark,  
So were made empty°  
The types of the Scriptures.  
He who terminated by His coming  
The mysteries of the Law,  
Accomplished in the churches  
The types of the ark :—  
Glory be to Thy Advent !

Behold, my mind wanders,  
Having embarked<sup>r</sup> upon the flood  
Of our Redeemer—which is terrible !  
Blessed be Noah,  
Who although his ship,  
Even the ark, floated on the flood,  
Was yet firm in mind.  
Oh Lord, let my faith be  
A ship to my infirmity ;  
For behold the daring<sup>r</sup> are sunk  
In the abyss of Thy investigation :—  
Praises be to Him who begat Thee !

THE structure of this hymn is very complete, and serves to illustrate, in some measure, the method of using these productions. The metre is pentasyllabic, in strophes of twelve verses, the last verse of each being a doxology. It should perhaps have been placed among the Homilies, but its evident adaptation to a choral performance, and the little there is in it of a controversial character, may vindicate its place among the Hymns.


<sup>a</sup> "Impartial justice," ܡܠܝܫܬܐ.—On this word see note *a*, Hymn XIV.


<sup>b</sup> "By the armour of innocence."—"The innocent." The words thus translated are ܡܠܝܫܬܐ and ܡܠܝܫܬܐ, from ܡܠܝܫܬܐ, to which Castell gives the meanings, *erubuit, verecundus, modestus, castus, sobrius fuit*. A comparison of the places in which this word and its derivatives occur, clearly shews that its generic meaning is *abstinence from excess of any kind*, as designated by the English word *sobriety*. It does not occur in Hebrew or Chaldee; but in Arabic ܡܠܝܫܬܐ among other meanings has, *recusavit, noluit, declinavit, destitit*. In a religious sense, *self-control* from a regard to the will of God, seems to be the true idea of the word in Syriac, which well describes the character of Noah among his lawless and licentious neighbours. These observations are made, because in the *Select Works of S. Ephraem the Syrian*, by the Rev. J. B. Morris, to which reference is made in the Introduction, the virtue of Noah is said to be *chastity* in the special sense; and, in a note to this very passage, his abstinence from marriage until his five hundredth year is alleged as a proof that chastity was the virtue which God so eminently rewarded. This is not the place to point out the very numerous objections which exist against this view; it is sufficient to shew that it is unsustained on philological grounds, and by a reference to the *usus loquendi* as far as that can be discovered. Hahn, who has printed the Syriac text of this hymn in his *Chrestomathy*, gives to ܡܠܝܫܬܐ the meaning *sanctus*, among others; and to ܡܠܝܫܬܐ, *castitas, innocentia*, the latter of which has been followed in this translation. See also a valuable note in p. 116 of Hahn, where he gives this general meaning to ܡܠܝܫܬܐ, "*animi integritas nullis muneribus venalis, imo omne pretium repuens*."

<sup>c</sup> "Deficient in weight."—Literally, *who ascended in the balance*.

<sup>d</sup> "He dismissed."—Sy., ܡܠܝܫܬܐ, a word not well defined in the Lexicons, but the meaning of which is clear from Phil. i. 23, where St. Paul says he desired ܡܠܝܫܬܐ, *to depart*. Hence in Aphel, *to cause to depart, dismiss, bid farewell to*. It is more common in Chaldee.




e "Wandered."—Sy., *flew*, like a bird.

f "Who was lord of all."—Does this refer to Noah or to the Almighty? Benedict translates, "*Navis Domini*;" Morris, "*The ship of the Lord of all*." Now there is no way of determining this but a consideration of the context. The words, , *lord or master of all*, well describe the position of Noah sailing above a drowned world. The ark alone is here spoken of; that which it typified, *the Church*, is not yet introduced, and there is greater propriety in the application of the expression to the patriarch than to God.


g "And reached unto the north."—, *measured*, and thence, like the Latin *metior*, *passed over to*.

h "In its course it described;" that is, by going from east to west, and then from south to north, it drew as it were upon the waters the figure of a cross. The words, *standard*, *cross*, and *helm*, refer to one object.

i "The threefold Name."—Morris renders, "*The name of the Trinity*," which is not literal. Benedict has, "*Ac triplicis nominis virtute*."

k "In the form of the dove."— is of constant use in Syriac and has various meanings. Yet the only notice of it in Castell is, *i. q. Chaldee*  *pro*. Schaaf gives as its meanings, *pro*, *loco*, *sub*, *vice*, *propter*, *pro*, neither of which suits this passage. Hahn has, *quasi*, *instar*, quoting as his authorities this place and another in Hymn XV., adv. Scrutatores, tom. vi., p. 30, strophe 11, where Ephraem says, "*Let no man unsheath his tongue like* , *a sword*."

l "Her."—Although the Ark and the Church are of the same gender in Syriac, the feminine has been used here to distinguish the latter more clearly.

m "And the mystery."—Both Benedict and Morris render  by sacrament; which has been avoided here as involving a *petitio principii*. Morris translates the last verse but one of this strophe, "*the sacrament of the redemption by her*;" a sense foreign to the text.

n "The old Covenant."— is of common occurrence,

signifying, first, *Genesis*; then, *the Pentateuch*; and, as probably here, *the whole of the Old Testament*. Of its etymology the Lexicons say nothing.

o "So were made empty."—Having accomplished their object, they were *emptied*, were no longer the depositories of precious things.

p "Having embarked upon the flood."—For the word *embarked*, the translator is indebted to Mr. Morris. The Syriac is ܥܠܐ, to which no such meaning is given in the Lexicons. It generally signifies *didicit*, and in Pael, *docuit*. But ܥܠܐ is a *ship*, and therefore the idea of *embarking* or *sailing* may be presumed to reside in the root; or a verb may be formed from the noun.

q "The daring."—Sy., ܥܠܐ, *the foolish*. But this cannot be understood literally, as it refers to deep and rash investigations of divine mysteries. Benedict translates, *temerè ingressos*.

# Metrical Homilies

OF

EPHRAEM SYRUS.

"EPHRAEM, A DEACON OF THE CHURCH AT EDESSA, WROTE MUCH IN THE SYRIAN LANGUAGE, AND ATTAINED TO SUCH RENOWN, THAT IN SOME CHURCHES, AFTER THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES, HIS WRITINGS ARE PUBLICLY RECITED."—*St. Jerome.*

"ST. EPHRAEM WAS THE AROUSER OF THE SLOTHFUL, THE CONSOLER OF THE AFFLICTED, THE INSTRUCTOR OF THE YOUNG, THE GUIDE OF THE PENITENT; AN ARROW AND JAVELIN AGAINST HERETICS, A DEPOSITORY OF VIRTUES, AND A HABITATION AND RESTING-PLACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT."—*St. Chrysostom.*

# METRICAL HOMILIES.

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## I.

### Description of Paradise.

THE REVELATIONS OF GOD ADAPTED TO MAN'S  
INTELLECT.

(DE PARADISO EDEN, XI., tom. vi., p. 595.)

THE air of Paradise  
Is a fountain of sweetness,  
From which, in early life,  
Adam inhaled nutriment ;<sup>a</sup>  
And the inspiration was to his youth  
Like the ministering breast *of a mother*.

He was young, fair, and joyful :—  
But having spurned the commandment,  
He became unhappy, old, and fading,  
Bearing the weight of years  
And a load of miseries !



No blighting frosts,  
No withering heats,<sup>b</sup>  
Are in that region  
Of blessedness and joy.  
It is a haven of gladness,  
A home<sup>c</sup> of delights,—

Light and merriment reside within it :—  
*There* is a congregation of harpers,  
A society of players on the lute,<sup>d</sup>  
The sound of Hosannahs,  
A Church of Hallelujahs !<sup>e</sup>

The fence which surrounds it,  
Is the safety which makes all tranquil ;  
Its wall and its precincts,<sup>f</sup>  
Is the peace which unites all together ;  
The cherub which walks around it  
Is gentle to those within,  
But threatening to those without, who are reprobate.  
Concerning this Paradise,  
Which is pure and holy,  
The report which thou hearest  
Is true and spiritual.<sup>g</sup>

Let not its nature<sup>h</sup> be judged  
From what is heard of it,  
For its descriptions<sup>i</sup> do not altogether  
Come within our judgment ;  
For although, by the names given to it,  
It may seem to be earthly,

In reality<sup>i</sup> that pure place is spiritual :—  
 For even the names of spirits<sup>k</sup>  
 Are common *to both kinds* ;  
 Yet that which is impure  
 Is far different from the holy.

For in no other manner  
 Is it possible for a speaker,  
 But by the names of things  
 Which are well known,  
 To form descriptions<sup>l</sup>  
 Like things which are obscure ;

For if He who is the Creator of the Garden  
 Had not shrouded its magnificence,  
 In words which are vernacular to us,<sup>m</sup>  
 How could He have represented  
 His garden, in our dark speeches ?<sup>n</sup>

For if among the names  
 Which are borrowed by the Divine Majesty,  
 A man should wander and be ensnared,—  
 He profanes and injures It,  
 By means of those borrowed terms  
 Which It put on for his benefit ;

And spurns the grace which bowed down  
 Its lofty height to his childish stature.<sup>o</sup>  
 For he having no natural affinity with It,  
 It clothed Itself with things like to him,  
 To cause him to attain to Its likeness.<sup>p</sup>

Let not then thy intellect  
Be disturbed by these accidental names ;<sup>2</sup>  
For Paradise is represented<sup>r</sup>  
In terms which are vernacular to thee ;  
It is not indigent,  
Because it is clothed with things like to thee :—

Thy nature rather is very imbecile,  
Which is not able to attain to its greatness.  
Insipid would be its beauties,  
Were it depicted in the colours,<sup>3</sup>  
Which are natural to thee !

For eyes which are feeble,  
Have not sufficient power  
To contemplate the bright rays  
Of its celestial beauties.  
HE hath clothed its trees  
With the names of our trees,

And its figs are called by the names of our figs ;  
And its leaves which are spiritual  
Are realized<sup>4</sup> and embodied ;  
They are transformed, that their vesture  
May resemble the vesture of *earthly things*.

The flowers of that country  
Are more numerous and brilliant,  
Than the starry lights  
Of this visible heaven ;  
And a fragrance proceeds from it,

Borne along in its gracious influence,  
Like a physician sent to the maladies  
Of a land which is cursed :—  
By its healing odour"  
Curing the distemper,  
Which entered by the serpent.

By the gale which blows  
From the blessed region of Paradise,  
Sweetness is communicated  
To the bitterness of this region ;  
This renders ineffective"  
The curse of our earth.

The Garden is thus the vital breath  
Of this diseased world ;  
And dwelling among the sickly,  
It proclaims that a living balsam  
Is sent to our mortality.

Thus when the blessed Apostles  
Were assembled together,  
The place was moved,  
And there was a sweet savour of Paradise ;  
Which stirred up its repositories,  
And caused its perfumes to flow forth :—

It diffused its odours on the messengers,  
By whom men were to be made disciples,  
And come as guests to the feast.  
Thus it seemed good to the high Majesty"  
Of Him who loved the children of men.

THIS piece and the following one are taken from twelve homilies, *De Paradiso Eden*, which are printed in the sixth volume of the works of Ephraem. In his catalogue of the writings of this father, Asseman mentions fifteen hymns on this subject, but this appears to be the result of a different arrangement of MSS. They form one continued poem, the character of which may be gathered from the two last, which are here translated. The whole are subjected to the same metrical construction. The strophes consist of eleven verses, all pentasyllabic except the seventh, which is of a longer measure, but not always the same. A striking effect is thus produced, which is retained, as far as practicable, in the translation.

<sup>a</sup> "Inhaled nutriment."—Sy., ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܒܐ, *sucked*, as a child at the breast.

<sup>b</sup> "No blighting frosts, no withering heats."—Literally, *cold of injuries*, and *heat of blastings* or *burnings*.

<sup>c</sup> "A home of delights."—The Syriac word rendered "*home*" is ܠܒܐ, *a returning, place of returning*; used of the goal, mark, &c., which ends a race. See Hymn XXV., strophe 12.

<sup>d</sup> "Players on the lute."—Literally, *a congregation of harps*, of *lutes*, by a bold metonymy.

<sup>e</sup> "A Church of Hallelujahs."—Perhaps these two verses should have been translated, *those who sing Hosannahs*, &c. But the figure has been retained, to convey an idea of the abrupt and startling style of the original.

<sup>f</sup> "Its wall and its precincts."—Sy., ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܒܐ ܕܠܒܐ, *its wall and the son of its wall*, the *antemurale*; "*muros et pomeria*," as the Latin translator renders it.

<sup>g</sup> "Is true and spiritual."—The four last verses of this strophe must be considered as introducing the principal topic of the hymn; the use, namely, to be made of figurative representations of divine things; and in a prose composition would be joined with the next sentence. The Latin translator does so, but this course is prohibited by the very artificial character of the strophes of this homily.

k "Its nature."—ܡܚܝܬܐ, *its history, description, its true condition, as it would be described by an adequate historian. "Its descriptions;" i. e., its true representations, are beyond mortal power. The Latin translator has, "quæ mortalis judicis cognitioni non subsunt."*

i "In reality."—ܚܝܬܐ, *in its power; potentia, facultas.*

k "For even the names of spirits."—The argument is, that two things essentially different in many respects may have the same terminology on account of some points of resemblance, as the Paradise described in human language, and the Paradise of heaven. Evil and good spirits are designated alike ܐܝܢܐ as to their generic idea, but are vastly unlike in their properties. The Latin translator loses sight of the illustration, and merely gives the fact it teaches.—"Vocabula quidem utrique paradiso communia sunt; at tu sacrum a profano excernito."

l "To form descriptions."—ܡܢܬܐ, *hearings, in the passive sense; descriptions conveyed to others by the ear.*

m "Words vernacular to us."—ܡܬܠܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ, *the children of our place.*

n "Our dark speeches."—ܡܬܠܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ, *our enigmas, parables; i. e., in our language so ill adapted for a clear representation of what Paradise really is.*

o "His childish stature."—ܡܬܠܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ, *to his state of boyhood.*

p "To its likeness."—The Syriac is very concise:—*It put on things like to him (man), that it might lead him to things like to it (the divine Majesty).*

q "Accidental names."—ܡܬܠܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ, *cognomina, surnames.*

r "Paradise is represented."—Literally, *Paradise is clothed in names, the children of thy race.*

s "Were it depicted in the colours."—The word translated "*colours*" is ܡܬܠܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ, from a root not often found in Syriac, at least in the existing Lexicons. In Aphel, ܡܬܠܐ, it signifies, *pharmacum, venenum præbuit*; and ܡܬܠܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ is generally rendered *pharmaca*. But Hahn, in his Lexicon to his *Chrestomathy*

has given the meaning, "*colores, et sæpe rationales colores quibus efficitur descriptio*," which is the exact meaning of the word in the text. It will be interesting to quote two passages from Ephraem, by which this view is confirmed. They are both from Hymn XXXIII., *Adversus Scrutatores* (tom. vi., p. 59). The first is in strophe 4:—

ا ل دى كوتأ	If then for painters
كلا دىوتى	It is difficult to represent
ل ذى صفتى.	Spirit in <i>colours</i> .

The second illustration is near the close:—

ا ل دى صفتى	For behold the <i>colours</i>
صكتا دى لى	Of the intellect of every mind
لا صكتى لى.	Do not come near to the Son.

† "Are realized."—Sy., *للى*, are seized, laid hold of. That which is in itself spiritual is grasped and confined in a bodily form.

‡ "By its healing odour."—Sy., *بى*, by the odour of its healings.

§ "This renders ineffectual."—*للى*, from *للى*, *infatuatus, insipidus factus est*; to deprive anything of its inherent qualities, render ineffectual. See Matt. v. 13, where the word is used of salt having *lost its savour*.

‡ "The high Majesty."—*للى*, a plural emphatic from *للى*, *elevatus est*. So at least the translator is disposed to consider the word, for it is not found in the Lexicons. In the small space of this homily, the lexicographer may glean large materials for his operations.

## II.

## The Subtilty of Satan.

HE IS DEFEATED BY THE REDEEMER.

(DE PARADISO EDEN, XII., tom. vi., p. 597.)

COUNT me worthy in Thy goodness  
 To attain to Thy gift;<sup>a</sup>  
 A depositary of sweet ointments,  
 A treasury of choice perfumes;  
 Delicately satisfying my hunger  
 With the scent of its spices.

In every age its odour hath nourished all men;  
 And whoever inhales it,  
 Luxuriates in it, unmindful of his food:—  
 This is a royal table,  
 Blessed is He who hath prepared it in Eden!

Something sprung up<sup>b</sup> within me,  
 And troubled me as I investigated it;  
 And I was desirous of making enquiry,  
 Yet feared to be presumptuous.  
 But as he who knew me  
 Understood my thoughts,

He clothed the question most skilfully.<sup>c</sup>  
 And from that I confided in him,  
 Respecting all he said to me;  
 For he took and fashioned for me  
 That which I wished, in his own words.



In this manner the Serpent  
Persuaded *Adam* to transgress,  
By his web of falsehood.<sup>d</sup>  
For he attentively listened  
To the truth of hidden mysteries,  
And learned it, and appeared to be wise.

A voice called to Adam and warned him,  
From the tree of the knowledge  
Of good and of evil;  
That crafty one heard the voice,  
And fixed upon<sup>e</sup> it an interpretation.

For he subtilly deceived the husbandman,  
To pluck immaturely  
The fruit which in full season  
Would have produced its sweetness:  
But that fruit, being out of season,  
Was bitter to the gatherer.

He interwove the truth with craftiness;<sup>d</sup>  
For he knew that the result  
Would be different to the presumptuous ones.  
For a blessing, by sinful actions,  
Becomes a curse to the receiver of it.

For remember that king Uzziah,<sup>f</sup>  
Who entered the holy place,  
And hastily took the priest's office,  
Lost the kingdom.  
Adam, intending to enrich himself,  
Incurred a double loss.

See, as in a type,<sup>g</sup> the tree in the sanctuary,  
 And the fruit in the censer,  
 The sense of nakedness in the leprosy :—  
 From two diverse sources  
 Ruin proceeded to both of them.

Then there came another champion,  
 Who was free from guilt ;  
 And He put on the armour<sup>h</sup>  
 In which Adam had been conquered.  
 And when the enemy saw  
 The arms of the defaulter,

He was glad and perceived not that He was concealed  
 Within, who was an object of terror to him.  
 That which was external gave him confidence :—  
 The Evil One came to conquer,  
 But was desperately vanquished !

There were two trees  
 Placed *by God* in Paradise ;  
 The one the tree of life,  
 The other of great knowledge ;<sup>i</sup>  
 These were twin fountains,  
 Blessed with all benefits.—

By these two glorious things  
 Man is able to become  
 The likeness of God :—  
 By a life without death,  
 And by knowledge without error !

THIS piece must be read in connection with the former one, from which it receives some illustration. Both indeed should be studied in their place in the whole production of which they form but a small part, in order that their beauty and meaning may be fully understood. The observations on the metre of the former homily apply to this.

<sup>a</sup> "To attain to Thy gift."—That is, of the Spirit spoken of as proceeding from Paradise, in the former homily.

<sup>b</sup> "Something sprung up within me."—**ܥܒܠܝܬ**, *scaturivit*. The same figure, expressive of mental conception, is employed in Hebrew; **עָבַר** *ebullivit, scaturivit*, is used in Psalm xlv. 1, "*My heart conceives (bubbles up) a good matter.*"

"Most skilfully."—Sy., **ܫܬܬܝܬܐ** *with knowledges*, an emphatic plural.

It is plain that this strophe has no connection with the former one, which obviously coheres with the previous homily. Asseman states (*Bibliotheca Or.*, tom. i., p. 84) that in one MS. the whole piece, *De Paradiso Eden*, is without divisions, which explains this want of connection; the arbitrary arrangements of transcribers having been a fruitful source of confusion in all branches of literature. The translator confesses that while the general sentiment of this whole composition is easy to be understood, this second strophe has presented difficulties which he has not solved to his own satisfaction. For example:—to whom does the pronoun refer in the sentence, "*as he who knew me?*" Is it a general proposition which is here stated, or is it a special case? The argument is, that Satan acted in his dealings with Adam and Eve, in the same manner as Ephraem had been treated in a case of doubt and difficulty. But who was it that thoroughly understood him, and gave a distinct form to the obscure subject of his reflections? The Latin translator has:—" *Quod ille mee inspector mentis compariens, questionem mihi natam scitè vestivit et explicuit.*"

<sup>d</sup> "By his web of falsehood."—"He interwove the truth with craftiness." The Syriac root in both these sentences is **ܥܒܠ**, the meaning of which is thus stated by Castell:—" *Mentitus est*,

*decepit, fefellit, dolose egit.*" Now the Hebrew לָרַח, according to Gesenius is, "*Texit, obduxit, unde etiam tectè egit, fefellit.*" This idea of *weaving, plaiting, or contorting*, is attached to the words in the text, as admirably expressive of the devices of Satan.

<sup>e</sup> "And fixed upon it."—Sy., ܠܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ, and followed it out to an interpretation.

<sup>f</sup> "King Uziah."—See 2 Chron. xxvi. 16.

<sup>g</sup> "See as in a type."—Sy., ܠܡܕܢܐ. This sense of ܠܡܕܢܐ is pointed out and illustrated by Wiseman in his *Horæ Syriacæ*, p. 49. In his Comment on Exodus, chap. xxxvii. 10, 11, Ephraem says of the ornaments of the table in the sanctuary:—"There were crowns on the table, in which we typically behold (ܠܡܕܢܐ) the upper and the lower world."

<sup>h</sup> "And he put on the armour."—The armour in which man had been defeated was *the flesh*:—Christ took this upon Him, that by His death He might procure salvation and defeat the devil. This is the doctrine stated in Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>i</sup> "Of great knowledge."—Sy., *of knowledges*;—an emphatic plural.

## III.

*Ad Clerum.*ON THE TREATMENT OF DIVINE MYSTERIES IN  
PUBLIC TEACHING.

(ADVERSUS SCRUTATORES, XXIII., tom. vi., p. 40.)

SPEAK, oh harp,<sup>a</sup>  
 For silence is thine enemy !  
 Speak therefore whatsoever  
 Is lawful to be uttered ;  
 For every other matter  
 Which is not proper,  
 If it is spoken,  
 Is blasphemy to the righteous.

He is allied with the infidel  
 Who presumptuously investigates,<sup>b</sup>  
 At the threshold<sup>c</sup> of death  
 Standeth that daring one,  
 Who hath laid aside  
 His faith with his research,  
 To descend to fathom  
 The sea of hidden mysteries.

Wonder not, oh youth,  
 At the things I have said to you ;  
 But take their dimensions  
 With due discrimination.

For the former denieth  
The Divinity itself;  
And the latter investigates,  
That he may dishonour God.

The Almighty in His nature  
Is more exalted than all things ;  
Behold, by His name, Lord of All,  
He is greater than all !  
Who then is so mighty  
In intellectual power,  
As to hold and measure<sup>d</sup>  
The ocean of wisdom ?<sup>e</sup>

Purify the harp  
Of thy spirit from contention ;  
Let it not play to thee of thyself,  
For self-conceit is deadly :  
Let it not whisper<sup>f</sup> to thee  
Even of vain glory  
In its melodies,  
For that is entire ruin.<sup>g</sup>

Make harmonious the numbers  
Which by research have become discordant ;<sup>h</sup>  
Call<sup>i</sup> back the notes  
Which have wandered through investigation.  
Place thyself, my son,  
Before the Divinity,

And then utter psalms  
To the glory of God.

Because thou art a harp,  
Thou art animated and eloquent ;  
There is freedom in thy numbers  
And in thy songs.  
Oh happy lyre !<sup>t</sup>  
Which of its own accord,  
As of its free will,  
Sings praises to God !

Put then thy soul in tune,  
And sing harmoniously ;  
Make thy notes distinct,<sup>i</sup>  
And play to us what is not mysterious ;<sup>m</sup>  
Be thou the disciple  
Of all things which are revealed ;  
And without trepidation,  
Let thy utterances be becoming.

Weigh therefore thy words,  
Let thy speech be unblameable ;  
Weigh them again and sing songs,  
Which cannot be complained of ;  
Let thy performance  
Be pleasant, my son,  
To the servants of thy Lord,  
And thy Lord will reward thee.

Utter not then in thy songs  
 What is injurious to man,  
 Divide not by disputation  
 Brethren who are united together.  
 Place not a sword  
 (Which captious enquiry is)  
 Between the upright,  
 Who have sincerely believed."

Sing not, therefore,  
 What is derogatory to God,  
 Instead of His praise ;  
 Lest thou err and sing folly.  
 Sing like David did  
 To the Son of David,  
 And call Him Lord and Son  
 As David did.<sup>o</sup>

Dishonour not through one another,  
 The Father and the Son ;  
 Sing not then to the Father  
 That which is reproachful to the Son ;  
 Lest thou also, on the other hand,  
 Shouldst sing to the Son  
 What is dishonourable to His Father.  
 By saying<sup>p</sup> that He is not truly the Father.<sup>r</sup>

That the Father takes precedence  
 Is without controversy ;



That the Son is second  
Admits not of dispute ;  
And the name of the Spirit  
Stands the third.  
See thou disturbest not  
The order of the Names.

Make disciples, it is said,<sup>r</sup> and baptize  
In the three Names ;  
In the name of the Father,  
And of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.  
For the name of the Son  
Cannot precede  
The name of the Father,  
Lest there be confusion.

But in what manner this exists  
Is buried in silence ;  
Far away from that silence  
Do thou utter praise.  
Let not thy tongue be  
A bridge of words,  
For the passage to and fro<sup>s</sup>  
Of all kinds of communications.

Offer praise to Him  
As the tithes of thy songs ;  
Present to Him as a sacrifice  
A sheaf of thy mind's productions ;<sup>t</sup>

Make thy praise ripe,<sup>a</sup>  
 And offer unto Him  
 Of the clusters of grapes<sup>c</sup>  
 Which thy tongue hath gathered.

THIS homily is composed in a metre which is common to many of the discourses to which it belongs. Each strophe contains eight verses, of various lengths, as indicated by the following figures : 5 6 5 6 4 4 4 5. Of these the first two and last four are uniformly regular, but the third and fourth are not so : it is indeed doubtful from the irregular division of these verses, whether they ought not to be considered as one verse of eleven syllables.

<sup>a</sup> "Speak, oh harp."—The bold *prosopopœia* which distinguishes this homily, is employed also in the two previous ones in the Roman edition, the three being thus identified in style and subject. Homily XXI. begins, "*Play, Lord, upon my harp.*" In the ninth strophe Ephraem exhorts himself and others in this way :—" *O harp, deceive not thy hearers, be not double-faced in thy song.*" At the close he says :—" *Let Thy Church be a harp to Thy praise ; upon it may we sing of peace, truth, and concord.*" In Homily XXII. we find this commencement, "*Praise the Almighty, who tuned for Himself two lyres, of prophets and apostles.*"

It thus appears that the figure having been suggested to Ephraem, he luxuriates in it and applies it in various ways. In this homily its use is more precise and exact, the harp all through signifying one whose duty it is to teach others ; and on this account the title, "*Ad Clerum,*" has been given to it. May not this piece have been used at the ordination of priests ? or was there any other occasion when such an exhortation was addressed to the younger clergy by a superior ?

<sup>b</sup> "Who presumptuously investigates."—The prominence given in these writings to men called, in the Latin, *Scrutatores*, makes it important to ascertain what class of men they were by whom the peace of the orthodox was so much disturbed in the days of Ephraem. Their principal designations are the

following:—I. **ܣܘܠܐ** is the name given them in the title to the homilies. It is from **ܣܠ**, *exquisivit, investigavit, scrutatus est, to search for something lost*; as for Laban's images, Gen. xxxi. 35; and for Joseph's cup, Gen. xlv. 12. II. **ܠܘܨܐ**, from **ܠܦܨ**=**ܠܦܨ**, Heb., **לפח**, *trivit, calcavit, trituvit, disputavit, inquisivit*. As, Mark ix. 16, our Lord enquires, "*What are ye disputing with them?*" Acts vi. 9: "*Certain of the synagogue disputed with Stephen.*" This appellation indicates the development in public of the curious prying indulged in private. III. **ܡܠܚܘܬܐ**, the participle Aphel of **ܡܠܚ**=**ܡܠܚ**, according to the etymology (**ܡܠܚ** the heel, footstep), indicates a still more subtil and insidious mode of proceeding. Of such a person Ephraem says (Homily XV., tom. vi., p. 30):—

"He who subtilly investigates  
Is a member smitten as with a plague."

The substantive **ܡܠܚܘܬܐ**, *disceptatio, pervestigatio*, is of very frequent occurrence. IV. **ܡܠܚܘܬܐ**, from **ܡܠܚ**, *petiit, rogavit, quæsit*. "*A captious questioner*" would perhaps be the correct rendering of the word. Ephraem, in the homily just quoted, says of this class of persons,—

"Whoever is a captious questioner,  
Is a companion of the lost."

There are other terms employed to designate the *Scrutatores*, but these are the principal. It might appear at first sight, as though Ephraem were an enemy to that enquiry which both religion and reason approve and command for the establishment of personal convictions; in other words, as though he inculcated a blind deference to authority. But a very slight acquaintance with his works will shew that nothing of the kind can be charged against him. He merely fights the battle which has been waged in all ages against those who mistake the province of human reason, and refuse to receive anything as true, the *modus* of which they cannot explain. The *Scrutatores*, therefore, were all persons

whose heretical opinions originated in this morbid attempt to develop what is essentially mysterious.

b "Presumptuously investigates."—The adverb here, answering to ܠܗܝܠܐ, illustrates what was said in the above note.

c "The threshold of death."—Sy., *the step*.

d "As to hold and measure."—To handle, and endeavour to ascertain by measuring in a vessel.

e "The ocean of wisdom."—The word rendered wisdom is the emphatic plural of *knowledge*, of which wisdom is a high degree.

f "Let it not whisper to thee."—ܠܝܫܝܠܐ, here translated *whisper*, has, in the Lexicons, this principal meaning, *locutus est barbaré*, like the Heb. ܠܝܫܝܠܐ, which only occurs in Psalm cxiv. 1. Michaelis in his note in Castell, s. v., conjectures that it may have the meaning *cecinit, insusurravit tanquam in aurem*, and this supposition is rendered certain by the text.

g "For that is entire ruin."—Perhaps rather too strong a term for ܠܝܫܝܠܐ. Benedict has, "*damnum id omne est*."

h "Have become discordant."—ܠܝܫܝܠܐ, which are thrown into confusion.

i "Call back."—Sy., *collect together*; i. e., bring the wild capricious notes into harmony.

k "Oh happy lyre!"—The Syriac has only ܠܝܫܝܠܐ, *oh lyre!* but it is evidently an exclamation of praise or congratulation. Benedict:—"O *felix es!*"

l "Make thy notes distinct."—ܠܝܫܝܠܐ is properly to *cleanse, make bright, polish*; to brighten up the wires of a harp would have the effect of giving each one its due prominence. Hence, figuratively, to make the notes distinct.

m "What is not mysterious."—ܠܝܫܝܠܐ, things not hidden.

n "Who have sincerely believed."—ܠܝܫܝܠܐ, Who have believed *without admixture*; the faith unmixed with speculation of simple, earnest minds. Benedict translates:—"Cave ne gladium, idest disceptandi studium, inducas in conventus simplicis plebis, assuetæ fidem, quam didicit, candidè profiteri."

o "As David did."—The allusion is to Matt. xxii. 42. But it

appears to be a quotation carelessly made, as David nowhere calls Him Son, though, in Psalm cx., he addresses Him as Lord.

*p* "By saying."—This rendering is given to the particle ܠܡ, which in Syriac so tersely introduces a quotation. It occurs again in the first verse of the fourteenth strophe.

*q* "Not truly the Father."—This is given as an euphemism for ܠܡܥܬܐ, *the begetter*.

*r* "It is said."—See Matt. xxviii. 19. The quotation is in the exact words of the *Peschito*.

*s* "For the passage to and fro"—*i. e.*, probably,—let not the tongue be a pretended medium of communication from that abyss of silence, where deep mysteries are shrouded from human gaze. (See Homily IV., strophe 6.)

*t* "Thy mind's productions."—Sy., *thy thoughts or imaginations*.

*u* "Make thy praise ripe."—ܡܡܢ. No instance of this transitive sense of this verb is given in the Lexicons. In tom. v., p. 488, speaking of Marcion, Ephraem calls him ܡܡܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ, *a weed which came quickly to perfection*. Perhaps the verb should be taken in the same sense as the Heb., ܡܡܢ, which, in Ezek. xlvii. 12, is rendered by Schindler, *primos fructos tulit aut præbuit*. The translation would then be, "Offer the first-fruits of thy praise."

*z* "Of the clusters of grapes."—A beautiful paronomasia, since ܡܡܢܐܝܐ signifies both *psalms* and *clusters of grapes*. This latter signification is given by Schindler to a closely allied word from the same root, and seems to be authorized by this passage.

## IV.

## On the Mystery of the Trinity.

DECLARED IN THE SCRIPTURES, IMPUGNED BY THE  
SCRUTATORS.

(ADVERSUS SCRUTATORES, LXVII., tom. vi., p. 129.)

THE standard<sup>a</sup> of the Truth,  
Is set up in the Scriptures ;  
But the blinded<sup>b</sup> have forsaken it,  
Who have begun to shoot their arrows,  
At the Lord of angels.

Now this is the standard :—  
That the Father is One,  
Not capable of division ;  
And that the Son is One,  
Who cannot be comprehended.<sup>c</sup>

The standard is revealed,  
Exhibited in the light ;  
But he who lacketh understanding,  
Shooteth his darts by night,  
In the midst of the darkness.

Let there be stillness  
Among the orators ;  
Let there be silence  
Among the investigators,  
Respecting hidden mysteries !

Let the mouth learn  
In what manner it should speak ;  
And then let it discourse,  
That it may not repent  
After it hath spoken.

First, let it receive instruction,  
And then teach others ;  
Lest it should become  
A kind of passage boat<sup>d</sup>  
For things which are unprofitable.

The Scriptures are exhibited to us  
As though they were a mirror ;  
That he whose eye is single<sup>e</sup>  
May perceive in them  
The image of the Truth.

There is displayed  
The likeness of the Father ;  
There also is portrayed  
The image of the Son,  
And of the Holy Ghost.

There are appointed  
The names of these Three,  
One after the other,  
In the confession of Faith  
At the rite of baptism.<sup>f</sup>

---

But an occasion hath arisen,  
 To throw this into confusion ;  
 " For it is proper," they say,  
 " That we should scrutinize these *Names*,  
 In order that we may comprehend<sup>s</sup> them."

Captious enquiry hath now begun :  
 Disputation hath entered :  
 War is commenced :  
 And the truth hath fled away !<sup>a</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

It is therefore preferable,  
 That without research,  
 We should possess the Truth ;  
 Than that by such research  
 We should want it altogether.<sup>i</sup>

Again, it is better  
 That in simplicity  
 We should inherit life ;  
 Than that by much knowledge<sup>t</sup>  
 We should inherit death.

It is also preferable  
 In the time of thirst,  
 To drink of the waters ;  
 Than, instead of drinking,  
 To measure the fountain.



It is far better,  
For a young child,  
To recognize his father,  
By actual vision ;  
Than by investigation.'

It is likewise better,  
By the constant<sup>m</sup> guidance  
Of a *true* faith,  
To learn the Truth,  
Without curious enquiry.

Then let the favoured congregation<sup>n</sup>  
Take pleasure in these things :—  
Lay aside contention,  
Be clothed with charity,  
And preach the Truth.

*God* in old time opened<sup>o</sup>  
The treasure of His loving-kindness ;  
And fashioned Adam,  
Who then had no existence,  
From the dust of the ground.

He next quickly unbarred  
The gate of Hades ;  
And caused to arise from it  
The body of Adam,  
Which was but ashes.

He then hasted to open  
The door of Paradise,  
By means of His promises ;  
And caused him to dwell  
By the tree of life.



Glory be to Him  
Who devised<sup>p</sup> this key ;  
Which, although it is but one,  
Could yet unlock  
All these treasure-houses.

Glory be to the Father,  
Who is concealed in His own being ;—  
Glory be to the Son,  
Who is concealed in His generation ;—  
By the seal of silence.<sup>q</sup>


Give thanks to the Father,  
Who cannot be circumscribed ;  
Give thanks to the Son,  
Who is unsearchable ;  
With the Holy Ghost !



Increase in me, oh Lord !  
Both silence *and the gift* of speech ;  
That by them I may be saved ;  
While I put away enquiry respecting Thee,  
And utter Thy praise !

THIS piece partakes more of the character of a hymn than a homily. It is evidently lyrical, and, but for its length, would have been placed among the hymns. It is distinguished by great conciseness, rapidity of thought, and a neglect of those connecting particles which give coherence and intelligibility to written compositions. This may be owing to the measure, which is tetrasyllabic, in strophes of five verses.



a "The Standard of the Truth."—This  as used here, does not appear to signify so much divine truth generally, as that portion of it concerning God, which is comprehended in the term, the Trinity. It is variously employed by Ephraem, to express important doctrines which formed a rallying-point for the orthodox, and a mark for the arrows of the heretics. In Homily XXXIII., *Adversus Scrutatores*, (tom. vi., p. 59,) the Son is said to be the  the mark :—

"And even as colours  
Cannot represent sound,  
So men's imaginations  
Cannot comprehend the Son,  
Who is a mark for the arrows  
Of crafty minds."

b "But the blinded."— Destitution of vision is not conveyed by this word, and on that account it has been rendered *blinded*, i.e., having the eyes closed or useless from some accidental cause. The word is alluded to by Castell only as a noun with the meaning *lema*, *sordes in oculo*, *albugo*. Hahn, on the authority of this passage in Ephraem, gives the explanation, *albugine oculorum laborans*, *cæcus*. Morris, *blear-eyed*.

c "Cannot be comprehended."—Sy.,   *investigabilis*.

d "A kind of passage boat."—See note *s* on Homily III.

e "He whose eye is single."—See Matt. vi. 22. Although the word here is not  as in the *Peschito*, but  it expresses equally well the Greek *ἀπλοῦς*.


f "At the rite of Baptism."—Literally, *at Baptism*. Benedict has, *ad Baptismum usurpamus*.


g "Comprehend them."— *that we may possess them*, appropriate them, make them our mental acquisitions.

<sup>h</sup> "The truth hath fled away."—A verse is wanting here, although the sense is complete without it. Hahn suggests that the fourth verse may have been repeated. This is not improbable, as the next strophe introduces a new part of the subject. All these apparent irregularities must be collated, before their object can be ascertained, if they have any.

<sup>i</sup> "We should want it altogether."—Benedict well expresses the meaning of this strophe, "*Atqui non istuc profectó rerum nostrarum ratio postulabat, quibus multó magis expediebat, quantulumcumque veritatis particulam tenere, simpliciter credendo, quam disceptando, eandem ex toto destitui.*"


<sup>k</sup> "Much knowledge."—Sy., *knowledges*, a plural emphatic. Hahn, *sapientie fastu*.

<sup>l</sup> "Than by investigation."—, by a narrow scrutiny, such as a child would give the features of a person he was told to consider his parent, but whom he did not remember. *Actual vision*, in the former verse may mean *at a glance*.

<sup>m</sup> "The constant guidance."—Sy., , the guidings or leadings. An emphatic plural. Hengstenberg is praised by a writer in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, (No. vi., New Series, p. 437,) for having in his work on the *Psalms*, elucidated the uses of the emphatic plural in Hebrew. Its use in Syriac is much more frequent and expressive than the existing grammars intimate.

<sup>n</sup> "The favoured congregation."—Sy., *blessed*. The whole body of the clergy seems here to be addressed. Or may not the terms of the strophe apply to all Christians?

<sup>o</sup> "God in old time opened."—Another subject is here introduced, separable, yet connected with what has preceded. The whole piece is thus divided into three parts.

<sup>p</sup> "Who devised this key."—, rendered, *devised*, is a word appropriated to the casting of metals. It also signifies *to devise*, *to cogitate*. The idea conveyed in the text is that of great skill in the production of a master-key, which should unlock so many receptacles.

<sup>q</sup> "By the seal of silence."—In the translation this verse is made to bear both on the Father and the Son, although at first sight it would seem to be confined to the latter.

## V.

## That Matter is not Eternal.

AGAINST MARCION, BARDESANES, AND MANES.

(ADVERSUS HÆRESES, XIV., tom. v., p. 487.)

WHEN things of an unyielding nature  
 Are to be wrought upon,  
 Tools of hard temperament  
 Are brought to the work.  
 By the means of hardened iron,  
 And a fierce flame,  
 And a strong blast of wind,  
 And by wisdom and power,  
 They are subdued, and brought  
 Into the furnace to be fashioned,  
 That they may become useful.

Rebellious natures which proceed not  
 Into the path of duty by gentleness ;  
 By the bridle and the yoke  
 Have their stubbornness subdued,<sup>a</sup>  
 So that it yields to the trainer.  
 If they revolt, they are tortured ;  
 But if they obey, it is for their happiness ;  
 If they harden themselves,  
 The rod urges them on ;  
 But if they are tractable,  
 Love is their leader.

Thus the yoke is to make them submissive ;  
The rod is for their stubbornness ;  
Pain is to correct their obduracy ;  
Strength is to reduce them to order ;  
Counsel is intended to persuade them ;  
Wisdom to be their leader ;  
Love brings them to the society of others ;  
Success<sup>b</sup> is for their probation ;  
Peace for their concord ;  
Wealth gives occasion for victory ;<sup>c</sup>  
And reputation for prudent counsel.<sup>d</sup>

Again, there are rebellious natures  
Which are similar to Pharaoh.  
When he suffered punishment,  
He turned and became penitent ;  
But when he was lifted up<sup>e</sup> again,  
He forgot *the past* and was obstinate :  
He was a type of the unstable,  
Who, being exalted to honour,  
Delight to inflict injury.  
These, abusing kind treatment,  
Must be restrained by wrath.<sup>f</sup>

If thou shouldst demean thyself humbly,  
They will think you despicable ;  
If thou actest boldly,  
They will consider you as without understanding ;  
Be of an easy temperament,<sup>g</sup>  
They will swallow up and drown you ;<sup>h</sup>

If thou art of strict manners,  
They will avoid and curse you ;  
But if thou art sociable,  
They will think you guileful,  
Double-faced, and insidious.<sup>i</sup>

If they are sick they require your aid ;  
And if they are slighted they condemn you ;  
If they are visited they act ungratefully ;  
If they become convalescent they forsake you ;  
If they get abroad they injure you ;  
Ask for your due and they will curse you ;  
Forgive them and they will trample on you :  
So that neither favour shewn,  
Nor the exercise of strict justice,  
Are ever pleasing to those  
Who seek occasion to be more wicked.<sup>k</sup>

Now consider that all of these  
Are the children of one error ;  
Who from among the Greeks  
Have received a hateful name,  
That of the profane Hylë.<sup>l</sup>  
For of this there is no account  
By Moses in the Law :  
The Prophets described it not,  
Nor have the Apostles written of it ;  
But all the children of the truth  
Have proclaimed but one essence.<sup>m</sup>

Behold how the children of deceit  
Have combined together,  
Who have represented Hylë as eternal !  
Marcion hath written of it  
That it is opposed to the Creator.  
Bardesanes also wrote of it  
In his history of the Maker<sup>n</sup> of the world.  
The Babylonian Manes, having no understanding,  
Described it as about to be fettered.<sup>o</sup>  
But it was the part of Moses to write the holy  
mystery.

Neither did the Just One hesitate  
To relate, by the mouth of His preachers,<sup>p</sup>  
The truth to those who would listen to it.<sup>r</sup>

The elect Moses was silent on this subject,  
That he might shame these reprobates,  
Who call aloud on the name of Hylë,  
In the same manner as the crucifiers  
United to shout together  
The name of Barabbas ;  
For they saw he was a great robber,  
And would make him their chief,  
That they might be able by that strong one  
To slay that mighty Hero  
Who had subjected His power to them.<sup>r</sup>

Marcion collected together his wolves,  
And his ally collected his foxes,  
And Manes his herds of swine ;



That they might war against Him  
Who, by the hand of David,  
Had stopped the roaring of the lion and the bear,  
And bound together the foxes  
By the hand of Samson.  
A type this of their brethren,\*  
Whom, by their own declarations,  
The truth casts into chains !

And their error is as a cornet  
To those who wander from the way.  
By their trumpets the circumcised ones<sup>4</sup>  
Are all aroused and proclaim  
Disputation and strife.  
The bramble calls to the thorns,  
And the thorn to the tares,  
And the rush calls to the chaff :  
They excite themselves as with strong drink,<sup>5</sup>  
And come together to contend  
With the fire of the Almighty.

And now conspire together  
Vipers which have no pity,  
And the asp without ears,  
And the serpent destitute of feet ;  
And presumptuously attempt to bite  
The stone which broke in pieces  
The image which the king dreamed<sup>6</sup> of,  
In the midst of Babylon ;  
Whose head was that of a dragon,

Its feet those of a basilisk,  
And its belly that of a serpent.

There are gathered and joined together  
Earth-worms and locusts,  
And the destroying moth,  
That they may trample into dust  
The heel of the mighty Hero ;  
Even the heel of Him who is of the stock  
Of the kings of the house of David,  
Which once descended into the sea,  
And walked upon it,  
And brake in pieces Leviathan,<sup>u</sup>  
And ascended triumphantly.

The vulture expands his wings,  
And rising up joineth himself  
To the crows—the children of darkness ;  
The eagle calls to the kite,  
And the ravens respond to him ;  
That they may fight against  
The great Eagle of heaven ;  
The thundering sound of whose wings  
Put Satan to flight :  
And He opened the door of Paradise  
And admitted the *penitent* robber.

THE title of this homily is that given to it by Asseman in his catalogue of the works of Ephraem. (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 127.) The metre is pentasyllabic, in strophes of eleven verses.

The translator has laboured diligently to give a correct translation of this singular and interesting production; but he hopes his readers may be more successful than himself in catching up, and retaining, the uniting thread of thought which doubtless runs through it, and which would give a unity and coherence to the whole. The question to be decided is, whether the whole homily is intended to refute the Gnostics? or whether the introduction of those heretics in the seventh strophe is merely illustrative of what had been said of the rebellious and wicked before? Perhaps the striking descriptions of the power of mind over matter, in the first strophe, and of superior natures over inferior ones in the strophes which follow, are intended to refute, in some way, the idea of the *stubbornness of matter* which so characterized the Gnostic system. It is felt that these and many other questions would be set at rest by a diligent study of the whole series of homilies against heresies, of which this is one. See the remarks on this portion of Ephraem's writings in the Introduction.

<sup>a</sup> "Have their stubbornness subdued."—Sy., *are convinced or persuaded of their* ܡܕܢܐܝܐ; a word which does not occur in the Lexicons, though its cognates are of frequent occurrence. ܡܕܢܐܝܐ is, *difficilis, hebes, impeditus, insipiens*.

<sup>b</sup> "Success is for their probation."—ܡܠܬܐ, rendered *success*, is a word worthy of the attention of lexicographers. Benedict renders it *profectus*. ܡܠܬܐ is, *manu promptus, celer in negotiis*, and ܡܠܬܐ, *facultates, bona, opes*. Therefore, although the meaning given here to ܡܠܬܐ is not recorded, it cannot be doubtful.

<sup>c</sup> "Wealth gives occasion for victory:"—i. e., for the restraint and conquest of those evils to which it leads.

<sup>d</sup> "And reputation for prudent counsel."—The Syriac for reputation here is ܡܠܬܐ, *glory, renown*; but when applied to common life, *reputation among others*. This gives occasion for prudent watchfulness against detractors, &c.

<sup>e</sup> "When he was lifted up again."—ܡܠܬܐ is not found in this

sense in Castell, or any other Lexicon. The meaning however may be gathered from the Arabic <sup>ع</sup>ب<sup>د</sup> *editus, elatus fuit*.

f "Must be restrained by wrath."—Having noticed various characters, who by correction and discipline are improved, Ephraem proceeds to describe those who, like Pharaoh, are only hardened by them. The thought cannot here fail to be suggested, that in the days of Ephraem the evil tempers with which he came in contact, were precisely those which Christ's servants too often now meet with in their public life.

g "An easy temperament."—~~ع~~<sup>س</sup>~~م~~<sup>ه</sup>~~ن~~<sup>ه</sup> *bland, gentle, good-natured*.

h "They will swallow up and drown you."—Literally, *they will swallow thee up, and thou shalt be covered up, or buried*.

i "Double-faced and insidious."—~~س~~<sup>ك</sup>~~ف~~<sup>ك</sup> is properly *inconstans, variabilis*. ~~س~~<sup>ك</sup>~~ف~~<sup>ك</sup> is made to yield the meaning of *insidious* with difficulty, as far as the Lexicons are concerned. The rendering generally given is, *suffocator*: Anglicé, *hangman*; but although the idea of *ropes, nets, snares*, seems to peep out occasionally in Castell, the milder interpretation is not supported. The Arabic is equally untractable, and only renders aid in an obscure passage in Schindler. He says, that in Mark vi. 19, the Arabic for the Greek *ἐνεῖχεν* has <sup>ح</sup>ق<sup>ق</sup> *insidiabatur*.

k "Who seek occasion to be more wicked."—Benedict, "*Qui ubique et undique arripiunt, unde peiores fiant*."

l "That of the profane Hylë."—This verse lands us at once into the midst of the great controversy with the Gnostics, which agitated the early Church. For the bearing of the works of Ephraem on this fruitful source of error and of religious contention, the reader is referred to the Introduction. Only so much will here be said on the subject as is necessary to illustrate the text. It has been well said by Gieseler, that the basis of the Gnostic speculation was the old question *πόθεν τὸ κακόν*, or the origin of evil. Amidst various shades of difference, the Gnostic Christians referred evil to a source independent both of God and man, and this was generally the Hylë, mentioned with such ab-

horrence by Ephraem in this passage. It is the Greek "Υλη, originally a simple noun signifying *materia quæcumque, unde aliquid fit*; but by the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, it was exalted to a position of influence little inferior to that of the great and only God. Even Bardesanes, whose heresy assumed a far milder form than that of Marcion or Manes, entertained this idea of the Hylë, "*Dissidet a Deo invisibili longo intervallo materia æterna, massa fetida et deformis, iners et tenebricosa, unde mala omnia scaturiunt, ipsius diaboli mater et sedes.*"—(See *Bardesanes Gnosticus*, Hahn, p. 59.)

The word rendered *profane*, is also *obscene*; in this place it appears to be opposed to *sacred*; no sacred writer had mentioned it.

<sup>m</sup> "One essence."—ܐܠܗܐ. Benedict, "*unam quippe essentiam sempiternam omnes filii veritatis prædicarunt.*" This is properly the adjective *æternus*, the substantive being ܠܗܐ; but it is often used as a noun, *ens*, τὸ ὄν.

<sup>n</sup> "In his history of the Maker of the world."—Only small fragments survive of the works of Bardesanes in the writings of others. From Ephraem a pretty full account of his sentiments may be collected.

<sup>o</sup> "About to be fettered."—ܐܠܗܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ. Benedict, "*in carcerem compegit.*" Of course it is not alleged as a fault in Manes, that in his creed he declared that the principle of evil should one day be overcome by that of light:—the object of Ephraem is to shew the *inconsistency* of these philosophizing heretics in relation to each other.

<sup>p</sup> "By the mouth of His preachers."—It is taken for granted that the reference here is to our Lord. The uniform testimony of the Apostles is against the principles of Gnosticism.

<sup>q</sup> "To those who would listen to it."—The Marcionites, Manichæans, and others, to support their own views, received or rejected portions of the New Testament. To this eclecticism there may be a reference in the text. This strophe is redundant in verses from no perceptible cause.

<sup>r</sup> "Who had subjected His power to them."—The manifest and uniform manner in which the Gnostic doctrines derogated from the

dignity of the Redeemer, will account for the strong expressions which occur in the remaining part of the homily.

\* "A type this of their brethren."—As the foxes were tied by their tails,—a conspicuous member of the body being the instrument of degradation and torture:—so the doctrines of the heretics were made to redound to their own refutation and disgrace.

† "By their trumpets the circumcised ones:"—i. e., the Jews, who gained a vantage ground against Christianity, by means of the divisions caused by the heterodox.

"They excite themselves as with strong drink."—Sy., **ܣܝܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ**. As **ܣܝܪܐ** has only the meaning of *to go round about to beg*, in the Lexicons, which will not agree with this passage, a rendering is given suggested by the Arabic **سَكِرَ**

*ebrius fuit*. Let the learned decide.

α "The image which the king dreamed of."—See Dan. ii. 31. **ܕܝܡܐ**, here rendered *dreamed of*, has the meaning *excogitavit* given it in *Pael*, by Bernstein, and the historical relation seems to warrant the variation of the idea given in the text.

γ "And brake in pieces Leviathan."—The figures of this strophe seem to be taken from Gen. iii. 15; and Ps. lxxiv. 13.

## VI.

## Error counterfeitz Truth.

(ADVERSUS HÆRESSES, XXVII., tom. v., p. 500.)

How much the heretics<sup>a</sup> resemble  
 Those who steal the signet of a king,  
 And impress false coin<sup>b</sup> with it secretly,  
 This, falling into the hands of the skilful,  
 They see there the seal and the royal image,  
 But detect also the counterfeit, and the fraud of the  
                   artist.

Thus the thief is not able,  
 To imitate<sup>c</sup> the signet entirely.  
 So false teachers,<sup>d</sup> who counterfeit the way,  
 Cannot imitate the waymarks<sup>e</sup> of the kingdom.

And while the waymarks are standing,  
 The road itself is not unknown ;  
 So that whoever is sound of memory,  
 When he looks on the waymarks, can understand  
 Both whose they are and whence and whither they lead.  
 Thus he who moves the waymarks to a by-road<sup>f</sup>  
 Deserves a twofold reprehension ;  
 For he injures the road and steals the waymarks.—  
 Blessed, oh Lord, is the power of Thy truth,  
 For no one is able to eclipse its beams !<sup>g</sup>

Come, let us further consider this way

Which the heretics tread in a by-course,  
Having stolen and arranged in order  
The waymarks of our true King.  
Behold ! the names of the Father, Son, and Holy  
    Ghost,  
The standard of the chrism also and of baptism,  
The breaking of bread and the cup of salvation,  
The stolen Scriptures also which they have corrupted.<sup>4</sup>  
Blessed be the King of kings,  
Whose way is like mountains which cannot be con-  
    cealed !

Come ! contemplate these imbecile men,  
Who with their broken fragments of truth<sup>i</sup>  
Would bury these high mountains,  
Which cannot be stolen nor concealed !  
And perceiving the waymarks cannot be covered,  
They call them by the name of another king who has  
    no existence.<sup>k</sup>  
Some men indeed err and believe them,  
But others reject and reprove them.—  
Blessed is He who hath fixed waymarks on earth,  
As He hath fixed the starry lights on high !

And as no man is able  
To conceal the rays of the dawn,<sup>l</sup>  
So no one hath power  
To hide the truth of the Scriptures.  
Some stumble in the many lights of heaven,  
And some err in the abundance of the Scriptures ;



In the lights above they find stumbling-blocks,  
 And in the pure Scriptures blemishes.  
 Blessed is He who hath illumined us with light,  
 And saved us by truth which cannot be refuted."<sup>m</sup>

THIS homily is said by Asseman to be addressed to all heretics. In reference to the structure it is peculiar. Each strophe has ten verses, but they are of various metres, and it has been found impossible to establish such a harmony among them as to express their relations in the translation. Further light may probably be thrown on the subject.

<sup>a</sup> "The heretics."—ܐܠܗܝܐ, literally, *the deniers or unbelievers*. Ephraem means all those whose creed consisted in part of a denial or rejection of some orthodox article.

<sup>b</sup> "False coin."—ܐܠܝܐ is properly *fraus, fallacia, dolus*. Benedict renders, "*nummos cudunt adulterinos*."

<sup>c</sup> "To imitate."—ܐܠܝܐ does not occur in any such sense in any Lexicon the translator has consulted. The context however demands such a version, and Benedict has "*imitari*." In Arabic there is a word which *may* assist to throw light upon this: كُرّ in conj. ii. is, *repetivit rem; to repeat a thing=make a duplicate, imitate*.

<sup>d</sup> "False teachers."—The general sense of ܐܠܗܝܐ is *doctrina*. But the meaning here given is established in Ephraem. Thus in the Twenty-fifth Homily, *Adversus Hæreses* (tom. v., p. 496), in strophe 8, we read of ܐܠܝܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, *teachers or guides who pervert the way*. It appears to be appropriated to false teachers.

<sup>e</sup> "The waymarks."—ܡܝܠܐ is properly *miles*, as in Matt. v. 41. So *millarium* in Latin. In this sense of *milestone, waymark*, it is not found in the Lexicons.

<sup>f</sup> "To a by-road."—ܐܠܝܐ, *aberratio, error*, Castell. In this

sense Ephraem uses it elsewhere. Benedict, "*ad obliquos flexus.*" It occurs again in the second verse of the next strophe.

g "To eclipse its beams."—All the strophes end with a doxology similar to this except the first; but it cannot be doubted that even in that the two last verses were taken up by the chorus.

h "The stolen Scriptures also which they have corrupted."—The Scriptures are said to be *stolen*, because they were taken as it were from the orthodox by the heretics, to subserve their own private purposes; the way in which the Gnostics rejected some Scriptures and mutilated others according to their convenience, has been alluded to in the notes to the former homily. When criticism becomes a pruning-knife to lop the branches of the tree of life according to the taste of him who handles the weapon, it is a sure proof that self-will and not a desire for truth is the moving principle.

i "Who with their broken fragments of truth."—Literally, *who with the stones of truth which have been broken into fragments.* The heretics retaining the ordinances of Christianity, and using a Christian nomenclature, endeavoured by the guileful employment of them to injure Christian truth.

k "Another king who has no existence."—As for instance the Hylë, mentioned in the last homily; or the other imagined beings which distinguished the systems of the Gnostics and the Manichæans.

l "To conceal the rays of the dawn."—Literally, *to cover the rising of the beams.*

m "Truth which cannot be refuted."—ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ. According to the etymology this would be, "with that which is *sure*, *certain*, and that which is *true*, *morally.*" But both words are used indiscriminately for *truth*, and, in the translation, the latter word has been used as qualifying the first by a common semitic idiom.

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## VII.

## The Mystery of the Trinity.

ITS ANALOGIES IN NATURE, AND THEIR  
INEXPLICABLENESS.

(*ADVERSUS SCRUTATORES*, XLII., tom. vi., p. 75.)

Who is able to circumscribe  
Within a narrow aqueduct,  
Or to bring through his own intellect  
The rough sea<sup>a</sup> of hidden mysteries?  
Disputation to us in our weakness  
Is like a bitter thing,

Much more so an argument of great difficulty.<sup>b</sup>  
Who is there of weak perceptions  
That is competent for the assault<sup>c</sup>  
Of that Mighty One,  
Whose generation is unsearchable !

The vision of that which is spiritual  
Is not congenial to our pupils ;  
Its appearance is strange to our eyes  
If we would gaze upon it.  
And who can become familiar  
With the hidden One by his research ?

Who is distant in all respects from all men !  
Who hath ever accustomed  
His mouth to the burning flame ?  
Or his palate to fiery heat  
Which never hath been tasted ?

Now be instructed by this fire,  
Whose fierceness was never tasted ;  
Yet its power is recognized  
In the flavour of what is dressed by it ;  
And thus it is a useful thing,  
And in every way profitable.

So also is the hidden Eternal Essence !<sup>d</sup>  
Mix and receive its influence  
In various kinds of good things ;  
For its investigation, in itself,  
Is difficult and arduous.<sup>e</sup>

The sun passeth through a transparent vase  
Into the midst of the water *in it*,  
And generates in the cold element  
The warmth of fire ;  
A progeny like unto itself,  
In a wonderful manner it begets ;—

The offspring rises from it without separation !  
For the ray is not drowned,  
Neither is the water divided ;  
It is a pure progeny,  
Which beameth forth with splendour !<sup>f</sup>

Gold is a single substance,  
A flower is threefold ;  
Stone is a single substance,  
But fire is threefold ;  
For flame, and heat, and light  
Are mingled in it.

For not by one example only ascendeth  
The language of created things !—  
Therefore without disputation  
Receive as they have been preached to us,  
These threefold arrangements.<sup>h</sup>

For they are not disposed in this order  
According to our pleasure ;  
But Nature as it is  
Exists in a threefold manner.  
Nor is it to be enquired for what reason  
It is found to be thus ;—

That it exists in this order is indisputable.  
For who complains of our statement,  
That fire is threefold ?  
No man questions it,  
But every one admits it.<sup>i</sup>

It continues to be a mystery to thee  
How the heat passes *through the vase* ;  
How it was conceived in the sun,  
And lay hidden in it ;  
And, again, how it was enveloped  
In the bosom of its beams.

Unsearchable is the travail that brought it forth !  
That birth is a miracle,  
The admiration of which should keep thee silent ;  
And restrain thy imagination,  
Because it surpasses thy understanding !<sup>k</sup>

If thou hadst never tasted a fruit,<sup>l</sup>  
To discover its peculiar nature;  
Though thou hadst touched it with thy hand,  
And smelt it, and examined it :—  
Yet because thou hadst not yet  
Tasted it, and proved its quality,  
Thou wouldst rely on him who had tried it.  
Since, then, that hidden Essence  
Is too mighty for thee,  
Believe that Fruit<sup>m</sup>  
By which its force has been tasted.

Take a grain of wheat, and split it open,  
And search into it and shew to us  
Where it hides the stalk,  
The ear of corn, and the root ;<sup>n</sup>  
Each of which is complete within it  
In a threefold manner :

Shew also which is recent, older, and oldest ;—  
And, although there was a beginning,<sup>o</sup>  
How fruitless to search it out !  
For their origin is concealed  
Within them and to themselves.<sup>p</sup>

But since even this illustration<sup>q</sup>  
May fail as not being perfect ;  
Let it be reaped and winnowed  
That it may come into use.  
Grant, then, that through captiousness  
The similitude has failed—

Do thou with sound mind *thus* contemplate it :—  
The blade<sup>r</sup> is typically the body,  
The full corn is typically the mind,  
And the ear is typically the soul ;—  
This is a celebrated parable !<sup>s</sup>

For consider that every similitude  
Which is written and constructed,  
If it fully depicted  
The whole object perfectly,  
Would be found not a resemblance,  
But an exact copy.


For it is necessary that shadows should pass through  
The network of time.<sup>t</sup>  
Thus our Saviour compares  
A grain of corn<sup>u</sup> to the kingdom,  
For our improvement.

Examples and parables  
Are weak and insufficient ;  
Comparisons and similitudes  
Are feeble and reach not to the object :  
They subsist in humble form,  
That he may be reproved

Who is haughty and arrogant.  
For if he is not competent  
To attain to the similitudes,  
How can he madly perplex himself  
With the height of Divine Majesty ?

The clouds are more exalted  
 Than the vapours beneath them,  
 The heavens than both of them,  
 And the heaven of heavens is still higher.  
 The low mountains<sup>a</sup>  
 Of this creation are high  
 To the dwellers in the dust beneath them.  
 Thus also similitudes,  
 However great they may be to us,  
 Are only thought to approach *the thing* signified,  
 Being, in reality, far away from it.

THE metre of the above is pentasyllabic, except the seventh verse which is heptasyllabic. Each strophe has uniformly eleven verses. Asseman thus describes the contents of the homily: "The holy doctor in this piece concludes that the divine nature is inaccessible and impenetrable on account of the weakness of the human mind, which is ignorant of the nature of things which are brought under its observation."—(*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 109.) It conveys a favourable idea of the skill of Ephraem in reasoning, and also of the richness of his imagination. These qualities are discerned by the readers of a translation. But it requires that the production should be studied in its native language, before the various mental qualities it exhibits can be fully appreciated.

a "The rough sea."—Sy.,  *the waves*.

b "An argument of great difficulty."—Sy., *when the scope or mark is of celebrated strength; i. e., when the divine nature is the subject of discussion. The translation of Mr. Morris is very different, and scarcely conveys an intelligible sentiment: "As searching is to us in our weakness, as it were bitter, how much more then is the standard of glorious might bitter?"* The meaning of Ephraem is this,—Disputation is even in ordinary cases and on





the threefold natural organizations mentioned before, as the connection and the argument require the words to be understood. The doctrine preached by "created things" was to be received; namely, that they exist in a threefold manner. Benedict states the conclusion which Ephraem leaves to be inferred: "*Quare, sepositis contentionibus, qualem observavimus in plerisque rebus adumbratum, hunc Deum disce trinum.*" Mr. Morris renders: "these threefold ones." But the whole of the next strophe is in accordance with the translation here given. Ephraem obviates an objection that these natural analogies are overstrained and far-fetched, by saying that they are not devised by him, but exist in the observation of every man, and cannot be denied.

i "But every one admits it."—Since therefore fire is admitted to be threefold, and yet the *modus* of its existence cannot be understood, the incomprehensibility of the Trinity is no argument against the fact. This is the conclusion of the reasoning of the former strophes.

k "Because it surpasses thy understanding."—The doctrine of the generation of the Son is treated in this strophe in as delicate and tasteful a manner as can well be conceived. If such a topic comes within man's legitimate range, a better example of reverential illustration could not be given.

l "A fruit."—There is no indefinite article in the text, but the connection seems to require that some speciality should be given to the word. Benedict, "*Si pomum nunquam gustasti.*"

m "Believe that Fruit."—The argument of the strophe appears to be this: God in His essence is not known (tasted) although certain qualities of His nature are revealed (touched, seen, &c.). But there is one who is intimately acquainted with God, who has revealed to us as much as can be known of His nature. Believe Him, &c. This is Jesus Christ of whom it is said (John i. 18), "*No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*" But a great deal of obscurity exists in the strophe from the double use of the figure *fruit*, which in the first case refers to God in His essence, and in the second to the Son. The translator has vainly endeavoured to discover the means of removing this obscurity, and is

obliged to leave Ephraem under the charge of darkening a fine stanza by an ambiguous use of terms.

That *Fruit* here refers to Jesus Christ is plain from the tenor of the argument; but another passage from Ephraem will confirm the fact. In Homily XXII. of this series (tom. vi., p. 39) we read—

"The Son knoweth the Father  
As the fruit its tree;  
And He also knoweth  
The fruit as the stock does."

"The stalk, the ear of corn, and the root."—The metathesis of the nouns here is so marked, and so out of the natural order, that it is evident some metrical exigency dictated the position of the words. So correct and practised a writer as Ephraem *must* have written *the root, the stalk, and the ear*, unless some weighty reason dictated another arrangement. An attentive examination of passages of this kind, (see note e,) will doubtless throw light on the subject of Syrian metres. Let us compare the natural arrangement in this case with that which exists, and see whether any prosodical principle can be elicited from the juxtaposition. As the verse now stands it is a perfect example of pentasyllabic metre:—

.شْنُونُوْ ʾvëkôrô. Shnōnō 'vëkôrô.

But if the natural order had been observed, the verse must have been tetrasyllabic, thus—

.كَنْيُوْ ʾvshnōnô. Kānyō 'vshnōnô.

Let it be observed that the long and short quantities are only marked conjecturally to give the illustration greater clearness. Benedict gives the natural order, "*radix, seges, et spica.*"


o "Although there was a beginning."—As it was abhorrent from the principles of Ephraem to admit that either of the divine persons ever had a beginning, this only illustrates the correctness of his perception of the use of such figures; he employed them *generally*, as to the main idea, without carrying out the resemblance in minor particulars.

<sup>p</sup> "Within them and to themselves."—The note of Mr. Morris on this passage is here quoted, as well explaining the meaning. His translation is, "*Their hidden beginning is from themselves unto themselves*:"—on which he remarks, "Even in this created thing there are operations which rise in itself, and have no issue save what is internal to itself. St. E. means to imply that the relations of the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity to each other, result from operations internal to the Godhead, and not from any operations issuing in us."

<sup>q</sup> "But since even this illustration may fail."—Ephraem alludes apparently to the slipperiness of his opponents, who would evade the force of an argument by captious criticism of the illustration. It appears then that this observation partakes of an ironical air, as he anticipates the objection of his adversaries. The *reaping and winnowing* have no reference to the illustration from the wheat in the previous strophe, except as that might be suggestive of the figure, but to the rough way in which he knew his argument would be handled by his opponents.

<sup>r</sup> "The blade is typically the body."—Here is an evident allusion to Mark iv. 28: "*For the earth bringing forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*," but not to the translation of the *Peschito*, all the terms of which, except the word rendered *the ear*, are different. It will be observed that the natural order is here inverted, as above, though not for the same reason, for the metathesis is of complete pentasyllabic verses, which neither gain nor lose by a change of position

<sup>s</sup> "This is a celebrated parable!"—It would appear as though he here triumphed over the objectors to the former illustration, by the divine authority of this; but it must be remembered that the application belongs to Ephraem, for our Lord nowhere says that body, soul, and spirit are represented by the blade, the ear, and the full corn.

<sup>t</sup> "The network of time."— *a net*. Benedict renders, "*Lucem permeantem retia, umbræ aliquæ sequantur oportet*." Mr. Morris's translation is almost verbally the same as that given in the text. The meaning appears to be this:—taking the network

to signify *lattice-work*, or some such mechanical contrivance to admit light to a dwelling:—The figures and emblems of heavenly things come to us through a medium, of the properties of which they partake; they pass through the lattice-work of this sublunary world, which divides the eternal from the temporary, and are tinged and coloured by the transit.—Benedict's version, which is very beautiful, amounts to the same thing as the exposition now given:—Shadows must accompany the light which, coming from heaven, passes through the windows of our terrestrial dwelling. Perhaps this is most correct. Mr. Morris's valuable note must be added:—"Aristocles (*Ap. Euseb. Præp. Evang.*) in the words, 'The senses are like meshes and nets and such like hunting implements,' *implies* what St. E. here states explicitly, viz., that they reach truth not without the intervention of a medium which partially obscures it." Some one has well said, that God is only to be seen by man through *the lattice-work* of ordinances.

\* "A grain of corn."—**ܐܠܝܐ** is a *grain of the summer*, nor do the Lexicons give any other meaning but *cestas* to **ܐܠܝܐ**, except Schindler, who says that it signifies "*per metonymiam, fructus cestatis qui siccantur.*"

z "The low mountains."—That is, *low* in relation to creation at large, not in relation to man. The thought is, that all created things, however great and high, are excelled by others; and in the same manner figures and similitudes are far surpassed by what they represent. The philosophical doctrine that all objects are great or little, relatively to the percipient mind, and not *per se*, is here employed by Ephraem to shew the insufficiency of types and parables to give more than a *proximate* idea of the divine objects they shadow forth. The whole theory here propounded of the nature and use of figurative language, is a fine specimen of biblical hermeneutics.

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## VIII.

## On the Two Natures of Jesus Christ.

HIS HUMAN ATTRIBUTES THE PROOF OF HIS LOVE.

(ADVERSUS SCRUTATORES, XXIX., tom. vi., p. 52.)

God, in His loving-kindness,  
 Calls mortal men gods,<sup>a</sup>  
 According to His good pleasure ;  
 But they in their enquiry  
 Limit Him who is really God,  
 As though He were man.  
 Cherubim bear aloft  
 Him who put on your body ;  
 Seraphim are abashed<sup>b</sup> before Him,  
 Angels are silent in His presence ;  
 But ye, oh impure men !  
 The generation of that Glorious One  
 Have vilely dishonoured !<sup>c</sup>

To the feeble body,  
 With which descending He clothed Himself,  
 His names and actions are accommodated ;  
 And as it was necessary  
 That He should suffer hunger,  
 So it was necessary that He should pray ;  
 And as the affection of hunger  
 Appertains altogether to the body ;

So his lacking anything<sup>d</sup>  
Belonged entirely to the flesh.  
Perish not through the names  
With which that Living One clothed Himself,  
That He might give life to all men !

For that Mighty One put on names  
Which fall short of Him through his bodily form,<sup>e</sup>  
Because of His mercy towards you.  
Concerning which of them  
Do ye decide that it is true,  
And honourable, and glorious ?  
The name of the Father is true ;  
The name of the Son is faithful ;  
That of the Pardoner is worthy of love ;  
That of Judge is terrible.  
As the Son of man He is circumscribed,  
But being unbounded in His nature,  
He is truly God !<sup>f</sup>

A weak measuring plummet<sup>g</sup>  
Hath presumptuously descended,  
That it may fathom the sea  
To find how deep it is !  
It would investigate the springs of water  
That it may ascertain whence they flow,  
And whither they are tending.  
But to search for himself  
Lo ! the foolish one is not able,  
As to the place from which

The hand which made him took him,  
And imposed on him restrictions,  
Which he despises !

Who hath seen the dust of the threshing-floor<sup>k</sup>  
Presume to examine  
The force of the wind, by questioning it ?  
But daring mortals do so  
In their investigation of Him,  
Whose breath gives life to the dead.  
The cedars are rooted up,  
And forests are twisted together ;  
But the chaff comes to examine  
The nature of the holy wind ;<sup>i</sup>  
And by the blast which bloweth it  
To the mouth of the furnace,  
Behold it is driven away !<sup>k</sup>

The Lord and Father, who to man,  
Is not visible, although He is his Judge,  
Reprehends these cavillers ;  
“ Why do ye thus pry into  
The generation of Him by whose hand  
Ye exist and were fashioned ?  
The clay is not capable  
Of investigating the potter ;  
Vessels which are inanimate,  
The artificer makes for his use ;  
But your Maker, who hath formed you  
Rational, and possessed of knowledge,  
Ye have scornfully rejected ! ”<sup>l</sup>



THE title given to this homily is suggested by the contents. It coincides with the account of the piece by Asseman.—(*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 105.) He says, "That there are two natures in Christ, he gathers from the different character of His operations and attributes, against the Paulianists, who taught that He was a mere man." The metre is for the most part pentasyllabic, although there are irregularities which prevent it from being assigned positively to that class. The last verse of each strophe is of nine syllables, and it was either used as one, or divided as it is in the translation. At present this is only conjecture.

<sup>a</sup> "Calls mortal men gods."—This refers to Psalm lxxxii. 6, "*I have said ye are gods*," as the passage is employed by Christ in John x. 34. The Jews raised the same objection to Christ's divinity as the heretics did in the time of Ephraem, and he forcibly uses our Lord's argument for their confutation.

<sup>b</sup> "Seraphim are abashed."—No such meaning is given to ܫܪܦܝ in the Syriac Lexicons; but in Arabic ܫܪܦܝ has among many other meanings *rubescere cæpit*. This, compared with the sense of *vilem habuit*, alluded to in note *g* of Homily VII. may warrant the translation. Benedict has, "*ejus conspectum verentur*."

<sup>c</sup> "Have vilely dishonoured."—As stated above, Asseman thinks this homily was specially directed against the Paulianists, a sect, which as he says, flourished much in Syria in the time of Ephraem. It originated in Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, in the middle of the third century. His views regarding the divinity of Christ, as described by Neander, (*Church History*, vol. ii., p. 362; ed. Clark,) were as follows:—"The theory of Paul gave prominence to Christ's *human person* alone, and the divine appears only as something which supervenes from without. We discern in it the deistic tendency which fixes an impassable gulf between God and the creation—which admits of no community of essence and of life between God and humanity." For the part which Paul took in relation to the hymns of the Church at Antioch, see the Introduction.

d "So his lacking anything."—That is, having wants and necessities which rendered prayer a duty and a comfort to Him. That God in our nature should pray, was a sad stumbling-block to the *Scrutatores*.

e "Through His bodily form."—There is an obscurity in this and the former verse, partly arising from the ambiguity of the Syriac text, and partly from the difficulty the translator has found in expressing, without a paraphrase, his version of it. The Syriac is, *on account of the body*. Ephraem means to say that Christ assumed inferior names, in relation to His bodily form, on account of His love to us. There is a strong metathesis in the original.

f "He is truly God."—Asseman quotes this passage as referring to the Monophysites and Monothelites, but there is nothing here which does not apply to the Paulian heresy.

g "A weak measuring plummet."—Sy., ܡܫܬܠܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ, rendered by Benedict, *vile lutum, vile clay*. Mr. Morris has *weak clay*. Now the general meaning of ܡܫܬܠܐ is *funda, a sling*. The verb is found in Hebrew פָּרַק *fundâ projecit lapides*, and פָּרַק *funditor, a slinger*, one who throws stones. A plummet being a heavy body suspended by a string, the relation of this to a sling is obvious. Such an etymology might be thought mere fancy, did it not so exactly answer the demands of the text. The word rendered fathom is ܡܫܬܠܐ, *to feel after, examine, search*.

h "The dust of the threshing-floor."—This rendering is given to ܕܥܝܢ, which is *pulvis paleæ, gluma*. In Isa. v. 24, it is said *their blossom shall rise up as dust* ܕܥܝܢ. It plainly means dust arising from decayed or bruised vegetable matter; and such a special sense quite agrees with the text where *wind* is mentioned, by which such *pulvis paleæ* was blown away from the more valuable matter.

i "The nature of the holy wind."—A fine use of the double meaning of ܕܥܝܢ *wind and spirit*.

k "Behold it is driven away."—It would be difficult in the whole compass of literature to find a keener satire than is contained in this strophe. Nobler natures, the cedars and the oaks, reverentially bend before a power which they feel, but cannot comprehend; but *chaff* turns and begins to question and examine

it ! but only to be blown more furiously and certainly to the fiery furnace !

! "Ye have scornfully rejected."—The fine contrast of the five last verses is worthy of special notice. Base clay yields itself up to the service of the potter, but man, rational and endowed with powers of intellect, turns against his Creator !

In the printed text, the last strophe but one is divided into two parts. There are frequent indications that transcribers did not always detect the systematic arrangement of what they copied.

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## IX.

## Man is ignorant of Himself.

HE THEREFORE CANNOT DISCOVER THE MODE OF  
THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

(ADVERSUS SCRUTATORES, I., tom. vi., p. 1.)

In place of the standard<sup>a</sup> which saveth all men,  
Which the universal teacher hath exhibited to us ;  
This, our presumptuous generation,  
Hath brought in a new faith.<sup>b</sup>  
He who is omniscient knoweth  
What is the cause of these agitations.

If their motive is arrogancy,  
May the Lord curb their pride ;  
If their motive is contention,  
May the Lord increase concord ;  
And if their motive is love,  
May He reveal His own to them that are His !<sup>c</sup>

Oh thou who aimest at the great mountain,  
Think not that thy arrows can reach it !  
They may go a little way from thee  
But cannot touch the standard !  
For high is the generation of the Son  
Above human investigation.


Take an illustration<sup>d</sup> from thine own nature,  
Comparing *this subject* with what is near ;<sup>e</sup>  
That by the testimony of what is near thee,  
That which is remote may be believed.  
Let thy mind<sup>f</sup> be that illustration,  
Respecting which speculators have erred.

For one confesses that it exists,  
Another that it has no being ;  
One subjects it to mortality,  
Another makes it superior to death ;  
One derives it from something,  
And another from nothing.

He who contemplates its greatness,  
Makes it a particle of greatness ;  
He who observes its evanescence  
Makes it a puff of air.  
One considers it to be breath,  
And another calls it blood.

One man contemplates its warmth,  
And says it is produced from fire ;  
Another, seeing its spirituality,  
Affirms that it proceeds from spirit ;  
One makes it a part of God,  
And another but His breath.

There is one who derives it from one essence,  
Another from many essences ;



One deduces it from one thing only,  
Another from seven<sup>d</sup> things mingled;  
One magnifies and exalts its nature,  
Another debases and dishonours its origin.

If then the unstable mind,  
Which even dreams lead astray,  
Thus have erred in investigating  
These reasoners who have missed the mark—  
Who is competent to search into  
That generation which is inscrutable!

Come! let us wonder at him who says  
That the mind does not exist;  
When even in himself this mind resides,  
And disputes against himself!  
It even denies itself, saying  
Of its being, that it exists not!

The mind which perceiveth not its own self,  
Whether it exists or has no being—  
That which is not able to agree with itself,<sup>a</sup>  
As to what its mouth utters concerning it—  
How can it be able to investigate  
Him by whose hand it was created!

Not being visible to itself,  
That it may see that it exists it has a mirror;  
In this, the faculty of speech,<sup>k</sup> the mind  
Is able to view itself.

For in speech consists its great honour  
Above dumb creatures.

The mind therefore exists,  
Which yet in its own perception exists not.  
For how can it not exist?  
Behold it is detected by its actions!  
For having its existence from the Creator  
It perished by its own free will.<sup>1</sup>

If therefore in all this  
The mind denies the truth\*—  
And not perceiving its own dignity,  
The mind repudiates itself—  
What is there it can confess,  
As it in reality exists?

And if by its own investigation,  
The mind errs as to its being,  
What can it discover by its research?  
What can it attain to by enquiry?  
If so far distant from itself,  
How can it approach\* the hidden One!

Since then our intellectual faculty  
Knoweth not how to know itself,  
How shall it dare to meditate  
On the generation of Him who knoweth all things?  
The thing made which knoweth not itself,  
How shall it know its Maker?

There is a mighty nature,  
 Ineffable by all lips !<sup>o</sup>  
 The mouth that will speak,  
 Of Him who is unutterable,  
 Brings Him to degradation,  
 Being inadequate to His greatness.

Whoever therefore is desirous  
 Greatly to magnify God,  
 (He being great in His nature  
 Will make him great who magnifies Him !)  
 Let him restrain disputation, which is unequal to Him,  
 And possess silence, which is worthy<sup>o</sup> of Him !

Grant, Lord, that I may use  
 Both these prudently ;  
 That I may not search presumptuously<sup>o</sup>  
 Nor be silent slothfully.<sup>o</sup>  
 Teach me the speech which is profitable,  
 And impart to me the silence which is prudent !

THIS homily is a correct specimen of the heptasyllabic metre in strophes of six verses. Hahn entitles it "*De Filii Dei naturam et generationem perscrutantium temeritate.*" The following is a translation of the remarks of Asseman upon it (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*, tom. i., p. 98): "Ephraem brings against the Arians the charge of *novelty*, which the fathers object to all the sectarians ; on the very threshold of his argument calling them to the constant tradition of the Catholic Church." He then quotes the first strophe, which blames indeed the introduction of a novelty, but calls rather to the Scriptures, than to *tradition*, in the popish sense. He then says that S. Hilary, a contemporary of Ephraem,



uses the same weapon against the Arians in this ironical quotation :—" *Tardè mihi hos piissimos Doctores ætas nunc hujus sæculi protulit: serò hos habuit fides mea, quam tu erudisti, Magistros. Inauditis ego his omnibus in Te credidi.*" He then returns to Ephraem :—"The holy doctor proceeds and attacks the Aëtians, the sect of whom principally flourished in Syria as in its native soil. For Aëtius was a Syrian, who advanced to such a pitch of madness that he dared to discourse and make definitions concerning God and the divine substance by the means of geometry, using a certain dialectic series of syllogisms; as though the infinite majesty of God could be circumscribed within the narrow boundaries of the human mind; and as though that alone was to be believed of God which could be discovered by the light of nature. That he might therefore repress the arrogance of the Aëtians, he lays down in the first place that the nature of God is incomprehensible. This he demonstrates from the fact that no man has ever yet attained a perfect knowledge of things created of God. And Ephraem embraces this opportunity of calling Aëtius to the knowledge of himself, and introduces the controversy respecting the substance of the mind, in which by the opposing opinions of various writers on this question, he also convicts those of folly who denied that man is endowed with mind and soul."

<sup>a</sup> "In place of the standard."—See remarks on ܥܠܐ in note a, Homily IV., where it is said to be *set up in the Scriptures*. By saying that it giveth life to all men, Hahn supposes that Ephraem alludes to the brazen serpent set up by Moses.

<sup>b</sup> "Hath brought in a new faith."—Sy., *hath made the faith new*, ܥܠܐ.

<sup>c</sup> "May He reveal His own to them that are His."—An allusion plainly to Phil. iii. 15, "*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*" The Syriac reads ܥܠܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܥܠܐ, which Benedict renders, "*Sin autem caritas (contentionum causa fuit) in suis ipse sua prodat;*" which Hahn says

he cannot understand, and proposes to translate,—“*Dominus suum amorem revelet super illo; h. e., suum infundat isti hominum perverso amori, ut verè divinus divina spiret.*” But Hahn appears rather to have missed the sense, which seems to be this:—Some may have preached heresy from no bad motive, but from love, however mistaken, of the truth; such are to be treated kindly, and he prays, “*May the Lord reveal His own truth to them that are His.*” Mr. Morris has, “*May He reveal to them that be His, what is His.*”

d “Take an illustration.”—**ܐܠܐ**, which is *exemplar*, *argumentum*, as well as *vexillum*, *scopus*.

e “Comparing this subject with what is near.”—Hahn renders, “*Proponatur tibi signum cognatum, simile illi remoto* (naturæ Filii Dei),” and to establish the version he changes **ܐܠܐ**, *that which is near*, for **ܐܠܐܐ**, *that which is far off*, by a conjectural emendation. But the alteration only derives probability from his rendering of **ܐܠܐ**, which he considers an adjective, *similis*; whereas if it is treated as an active participle, the sense is plain, and requires **ܐܠܐܐ**; “*comparing* (the subject under discussion) *with that which is near thee* (thy own nature).” It is true that the pael form **ܐܠܐ**, is that used for the active *comparavit*, but unless it is proved that the other is never used actively, it is better to presume that it is, than to alter the text.

f “Let thy mind be that illustration.”—**ܐܠܐܐ**, rendered *mind*, has a signification as wide as the Heb. **מַחְשָׁבָה** and the Greek **ψυχή**. Here it evidently means *the thinking rational principle*, *sedes intelligentiæ*, respecting which philosophers have speculated in all ages.

g “Another from seven things mingled.”—As Bardesanes introduced seven æons into his system, it is probable he is here referred to. In a hymn attributed to Ephraem, in his *Life* (*Acta S. Ephraemi*, Opera, tom. vi., p. liii.), he thus speaks on this subject:—

“Our confidence is not placed in seven  
Whom Bardesanes confesseth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cursed be he whose hope  
And reliance are placed in seven."

\* "That which is not able to agree with itself."—Benedict :  
" *Ipsaque semet sentire nequit.*" Mr. Morris : " *Sufficeth not to feel itself.*" The word ܐܝܩܐ is *sensit*, but construed with ܐܝܩܐ, as it is here, it means *to feel or perceive with another, to be consentient, to agree.* Thus in Acts v. 2, it occurs in this sense, *his wife agreeing thereto* ܐܝܩܐ ܐܝܩܐ. See Michaelis in Cast., s. v.

i "As to what its mouth utters concerning it."—ܐܝܩܐ here rendered *utters*, does not occur in this sense in the Syriac Lexicons, but it is very common in Hebrew and Chaldee, in the signification of *ejecit, excussit, expulit.* A very clear meaning is thus given to this passage :—"The mind cannot agree with itself as to what its organ, the mouth, puts forth respecting its nature." The obviousness of this sense makes it more strange that the passage should be so darkened by versions in which this use of ܐܝܩܐ is neglected. Benedict has, "(Anima) agitur obvolviturque se circum, trusatilis adinstar molæ;" *is moved and rolled around itself like a hand-mill!* Hahn quotes this without comment, but gives as his own literal rendering, "*Cujus os circum eam volvitur.*" Mr. Morris translates, "*which grinds its mouth on itself.*" The only foundation for these extraordinary mystifications seems to be the absence, in the Syriac Lexicons, of the Hebrew and Chaldee meaning of ܐܝܩܐ. Castell has ܐܝܩܐ a hand-mill, and that is the only link by which the present translator is able to account for the versions of the learned men which he has been constrained to correct. In despair of making anything of the passage, he consulted Schindler, and, to himself at least, the difficulty vanished.

k "The faculty of speech."—Sy., ܐܝܩܐ, *verbum, sermo.* But as ܐܝܩܐ is *logicus, rationalis*, why should not this be the *rational faculty*?

l "It perished by its own free-will."—It is presumed there is a reference to the fall of man. Mr. Morris translates to the same purport, but Hahn gives a different turn to the passage :—" *Ve-*

*rumtamen sic a Creatore habet quo sit, ut habeat a sua voluntate, quo pereat."*

<sup>m</sup> "The mind denies the truth."—*i. e.*, of its own nature. Benedict has, "*Jam si sua sic animam latent ornamenta*,"—on what ground it is difficult to imagine.

<sup>n</sup> "How can it approach the hidden One?"—Sy., *how can it come* ܡܥܡܕܐ close to the hidden One? as it must do to warrant the familiarity it professes to have with his nature.

<sup>o</sup> "Ineffable by all lips."—Literally, *which has never been spoken of by all mouths*. Mr. Morris renders it, "*The mighty nature that never was not, is spoken of by all mouths*," making ܡܥܡܕܐ ܕܝܢ a predicate of God, and not an adverb qualifying ܡܥܡܕܐ. But according to the *usus loquendi* ܡܥܡܕܐ ܕܝܢ would be *not eternal* if used as an adjective. Benedict, *inenarrabilis*: Hahn, *omnia ora nunquam enarrare possunt*.

<sup>p</sup> "Which is worthy of Him."—Hahn makes *the mouth*, and not *God*, the subject of the two last verses. "Let the mouth restrain," &c.

<sup>q</sup> "That I may not search presumptuously."—That it is only the *abuse* of enquiry which Ephraem reprehends, is plain from this passage. See note *b*, Homily III.

<sup>r</sup> "Nor be silent slothfully."—The only meaning given in the Lexicons to ܡܥܡܕܐ is *temerè*, which is not appropriate. Castell gives ܡܥܡܕܐ as *occlusio oculorum*; and the idea of shutting the eyes resides in the Heb. ܡܥܡܕܐ in Hiphel. In the absence of further authority Benedict is followed, who has *otiosè*.

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ܡܥܡܕܐ ܕܝܢ

A Prayer of Ephraem.

O LORD, WE INTREAT OF THY GOODNESS  
THAT THOU WILT FORGIVE OUR SINS,  
AND PASS BY OUR FOLLIES.  
OPEN TO US, O LORD,  
THE DOOR OF THY TENDER MERCIES,  
THAT THERE MAY COME UNTO US  
SEASONS OF REFRESHING.  
AND IF INDEED, O LORD,  
THOU DOST OPEN THE DOOR TO THE PENITENT,  
IN THY MERCY RECEIVE OUR PETITION!

۱۰۰ خلاصہ نمبر :

**٥٠٧٨٠ : احوال و آراء**

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INSTITUTE FOR ME NO COMMEMORATION,  
 MY BRETHREN AND BELOVED CHILDREN,  
 AND PLACE ME NOT AMONG THE CONFESSORS,  
 FOR I AM A SINNER AND OF NO WORTH.

*From the last testament of Ephraem.*

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*Although the printing the above List was delayed as long as possible, it is likely the names of some Subscribers may not be found in it. Should this be the case Dr. Burgess begs to express his regret at the unavoidable omission.*

## ERRATUM.

At p. 166, note *u*, for  read .

13 Paternoster Row,  
April, 1853.

ROBERT B. BLACKADER'S PUBLICATIONS.

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THE  
*Journal of Sacred Literature,*

EDITED BY JOHN KITTO, D.D., F.S.A.

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*The Journal of Sacred Literature* was originally undertaken "with the design of supplying a want, which had long been felt, of a periodical entirely devoted to biblical literature, and established on so wide a basis as to embrace the contributions of writers of different denominations and of different countries. The aim of the publication is thus to furnish the students and readers of biblical literature with an organ for the discussion of all the subjects in which they are interested, and for the interchange of their views upon questions of equal importance to them all. It aims at becoming a repository of the best results of the active biblical research of the present age; so that the Christian minister, and all those who take an interest in the wide and important range of subjects to which the periodical is appropriated, may find in it not only a *Journal*, which, by means of Reviews, Intelligence, and Correspondence, shall keep them well acquainted with the actual state and progress of Sacred Literature, but a *Library* of original and translated Dissertations and Essays of permanent value in all the branches of research which tend directly or indirectly to explain or illustrate the Sacred Volume."

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